DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 198 965 RC 011 865

AUTHOR	Nevers, Jo Ann
TITLE	WA SHE SHU: A Washo Tribal History.
INSTITUTION	Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada, Reno.
SPONS AGENCY	Bureau of Indian Affairs (Dept. of Interior), Santa Fe, N. Mex. Research and Cultural Studies Development Section.; Donner (William H.) Foundation.; Nevada State Library, Carson City.
PUB DATE	76
NOTE	125p.; For related documents, see RC 011 864 and RC 011 866-867. Paper copy not available due to publisher's choice.
AVAILABLE FROM	Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada, Inc., 650 S. Rock Blvd., #11, Reno, NV 89502 ($7.00 plus postage).
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*American Indian Culture; American Indian Literature; American Indian Reservations; *American Indians; Community Development; Cultural Background; *Federal Indian Relationship; *Land Settlement; Legends; *Life Style; Natural Resources; Quality of Life; Social Discrimination; Tribal Sovereignty; Tribes; United States History
IDENTIFIERS	*American Indian History; Bureau of Indian Affairs; Culture Preservation; Great Basin; Nevada; *Washo (Tribe)

ABSTRACT

Washo tribal history, including ancient Washo culture and the impact of white civilization on that way of life, is related in this book, which is one in a series of four histories of native Nevadans who once occupied the Great Basin area, and is based on interviews with knowledgeable tribal members and research in numerous archives. The first two chapters describe the three major geographical groups of the original Washo Tribe and discuss the common culture uniting the groups: traditional family life, marriage, child rearing, hunting, plant use, basketmaking, sports, religion, and medicine. Chapter three retells Washo legends, which preserve important historical events and instruct the young in tribal morality and practical knowledge. Chapters four and five describe the first contacts with non-Indians in the early 1800's and trace the growing influx of whites who had, by 1900, taken over Washo lands and depleted the natural resources. The final chapters discuss the abuses associated with allotting land to the Washo, who received no reservations until 1917. A summary of tribal history in the twentieth century focuses on the preservation of traditional culture while improving living conditions and developing tribal resources. Maps, photographs and illustrations, footnotes, and a bibliography of 150 entries are included. (JH)

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WA SHE SHU:

A Washo Tribal History

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Published by the
Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada
Reno, Nevada

Printed by the
University of Utah Printing Service
Salt Lake City, Utah

RC011865

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Cover: The Washo used long poles with hooked tips to knock pine nut cones from the trees. They carried the cones back to camp in a large burden basket, called a ***mom migh***. When the baskets were full, they could place the strap around their foreheads to make the heavy load easier to carry. The cooked pine nuts were ground into flour on the ***dim git***, a flat rock, with the ***gom mum***, or mano. The Washo carried the ***dim git***, the ***gom mum***, and the ***tu ca bel***, or cooking basket, inside the ***mom migh***.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments v

Introduction 1

WA SHE SHU E DEH (WASHO LANDS) 3

GEH SHA (WASHO LIFE) 20

WEH HAI GE GE A (WASHO TRADITIONS) 28

DA GASHU WETI (WHITE FACES) 38

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE LAND 47

THE PINE NUT LANDS 62

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY 75

Footnotes 94

Bibliography 106

MAPS

Washo Place Names 4

Da ow a ga 7

Washo Lands Today 63

Washo Territory 90

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Jo Ann Nevers, who wrote this book, wishes to thank the many people who have helped her. Among the many Washo who contributed to this book, some gave special help: Elaine Christensen, Jean Dexter, Marvin Dressler, Helen N. Enos, Margie and Ombi George, Bertha Holbrook, Amy James, Don and Winona James, Frank H. Morgan, Floyd Wade, Marada and Duane Wade, and Nancy Wade. Without their generous cooperation and encouragement, this book could not have been written. Jo Ann expresses her thanks to the other tribal members who also helped her.

Romaine Smokey, Jr., was the original writer for this project. Harold Wyatt provided a great deal of material on Washo legends. Thanks also go to Dr. Warren L. d'Azevedo for his contributions, and to R.J. Eben and the staff of the Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada, who assisted the author.

Initially, Norman Rambeau supervised the project. Winona Holmes succeeded him as Director of the History Project of the Inter-Tribal Council. Dr. Floyd A. O'Neil, Associate Director of the American West Center of the University of Utah, coordinated research and editing in Salt Lake City, Utah.

E. Richard Hart, Anne Shifrer, and Gregory C. Thompson did initial research. John R. Alley, Laura Bayer, and Lois Livermore did research, and gave editorial assistance and advice.

Ben Aleck designed the cover, Dorothy Nez and Richard Servilican provided illustrations, and Bobby Dee Severe drew the maps.

Funding for research and writing was furnished under a grant from the Donner Foundation of New York. The Research and Cultural Studies Development Section of the Bureau of Indian Affairs provided additional funds for research and printing. The Nevada State Library also gave funds for research.

Researchers worked at many record centers, including the following: National Archives; Smithsonian Institution; Marriott Library, University of Utah; Archives of the Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada; University of Nevada, Reno; Nevada Historical Society; Bancroft Library and Lowie Museum, University of California at Berkeley; Church Library and Archives of the Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints; Bureau of Indian

Affairs Records, Stewart, Nevada; and Federal Record Centers at San Bruno and Bell, California, and Denver, Colorado.

Photographs were provided by Dr. Warren L. d'Azevedo, Bertha Holbrook, Connie Hunter, the Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada, Amy James, the Nevada Historical Society, Stella Nevers, Mary Rusco, Romaine Smokey, Sr., and several people who wish to remain anonymous.

Jo Ann Nevers and the Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada thank all who have contributed generously to this project.

INTRODUCTION

The complete history of the Washo remains to be researched and written. This book, written partially from interviews with knowledgeable tribal members, tries to show our way of life before the white man came. Many distinct features help to make up our culture: gifted basketmakers, the wisdom of long-preserved legends, and the traditional way of life are only a few of these. With this background, the reader can better understand the devastating impact white civilization had on our people. We were a peaceful people who never fought the whites and were granted no treaty. After the white men took our lands, we struggled to preserve our way of life.

Traditionally, the people referred to the whole tribe with the phrase "Wa She Shu." The word "Washo," which originally meant "one person," is often used today to describe the whole tribe. It is difficult to translate many Washo words, for which there are no exact English equivalents. Often the connotation of words in our language cannot be reproduced in an English phrase, so the translations in this book give only a rough idea of their real meaning.

This book tries to portray, from our viewpoint, the unique aspects of our culture and experience. Our experience has not always been reflected fully or accurately in published accounts of the Washo written by outsiders. This history attempts to add another perspective, to show the Washo life as we have known it.

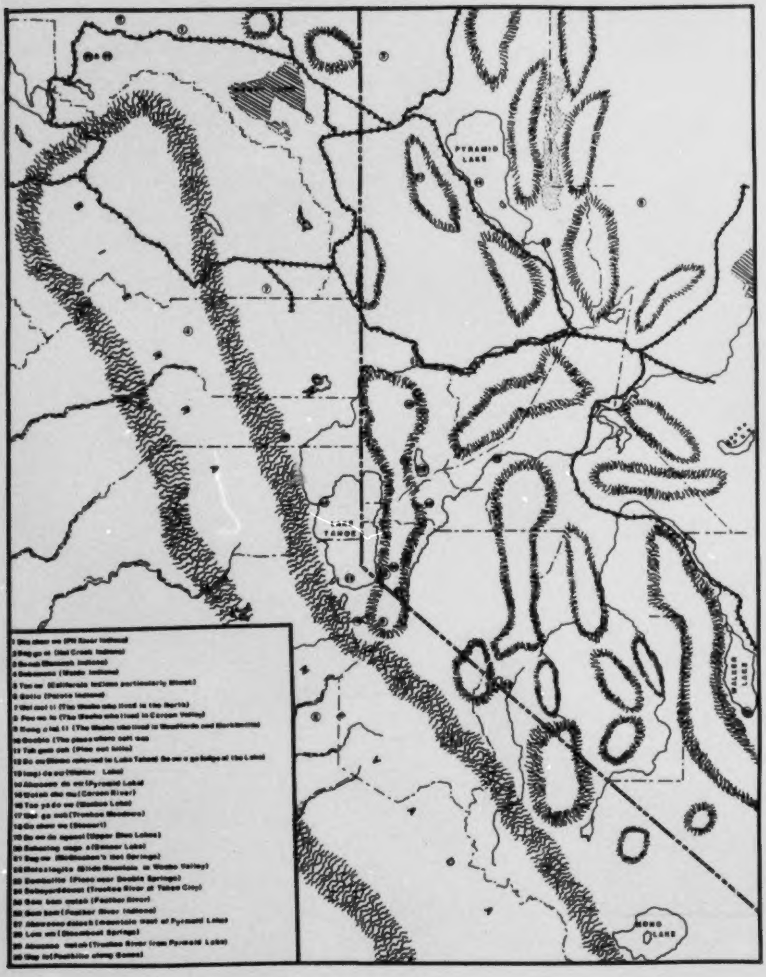
Wa She Shu E Deh
(Washo Lands)

> The Maker of All Things was counting out seeds that were to become the different tribes. He counted them out on a big winnowing tray in equal numbers. West Wind, the mischievous wind, watched until the Maker had divided the seeds into equal piles on the basket. Then he blew a gust of wind that scattered the seeds to the east. Most of the seeds that were to have been the Washo people were blown away. That is why the Washo are fewer in number than other tribes.[1]

Many legends tell how the Maker created the Washo in their land. As the traditions explain, the Washo did not travel to this area from another place. They came to this land in the beginning and have always lived here.[2] All of the important features of Washo land appear in the legends: "Each cave, stream, lake or prominent geographical feature is named and has stories appropriate to it."[3] The close observation these legends reflect is even more remarkable because of the size and diversity of Washo territory.

Mountains formed the eastern and western boundaries of Washo territory: to the east, the boundaries followed the Pine Nut and Virginia Ranges; to the west, they lay along the western slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Honey Lake to the north and Sonora Pass to the south roughly marked the limits of Washo land. The center and heart of Washo territory included Lake Tahoe and the upper valleys of the Walker, Carson, and Truckee Rivers. Within this area, the Washo were traditionally divided into three geographical groups. The *Wel mel ti,* or northerners, occupied the area around Honey Lake, Sierra Valley, Truckee-Donner Lake, Truckee Meadows, Washo Valley, and Eagle Valley. The *Pau wa lu* lived in Carson Valley, in the eastern part of Washo territory. The *Hung a lel ti,* or southerners, lived in the Woodfords-Markleeville area, south of Lake Tahoe in California.

Within these boundaries, climate and geography varied widely. The eastern lands, which belong to the arid Great Basin, have as


PYRAMID LAKE
LAKE TAHOE
WALKER LAKE
MONO LAKE

little as five inches of rain a year. The western slopes of the Sierras receive abundant rainfall, as much as fifty inches a year in some areas.[4] Between the arid eastern boundaries and the wet western ones, mountains and valleys watered by lakes and rivers offered a wide variety of vegetation, fish, and game. Washo land included high snow-covered mountains, fertile valleys, and deserts. Different areas in Washo territory contained different kinds of land and resources. The people knew their territory well and used all it could provide.[5] They watched the seasonal changes and the natural patterns of their land. As plants ripened, fish spawned, and animals grew, the people gathered food. As winter approached they built *galis dungal* (winter homes) in preparation for the deep snows and the cold weather. In everything they did, the Washo showed their love for the earth.[6] Respecting the land and the seasonal cycles, the Washo lived in harmony with nature.

Spring, which began the annual cycle, was welcomed after the cold winter months. In unusually severe winters, heavy snow inhibited plant growth. If the previous fall's pine nut crop had been poor, only small supplies of stored nuts remained. February, which the Washo called *Dey lu le,* was usually the hardest time. People who had not prepared adequately for this difficult time found it especially harsh.[7] As soon as the snow started to melt, the Washo began to gather food. When the melting snows and warmer days promised that spring was near, the Washo could catch fish and gather early plants.

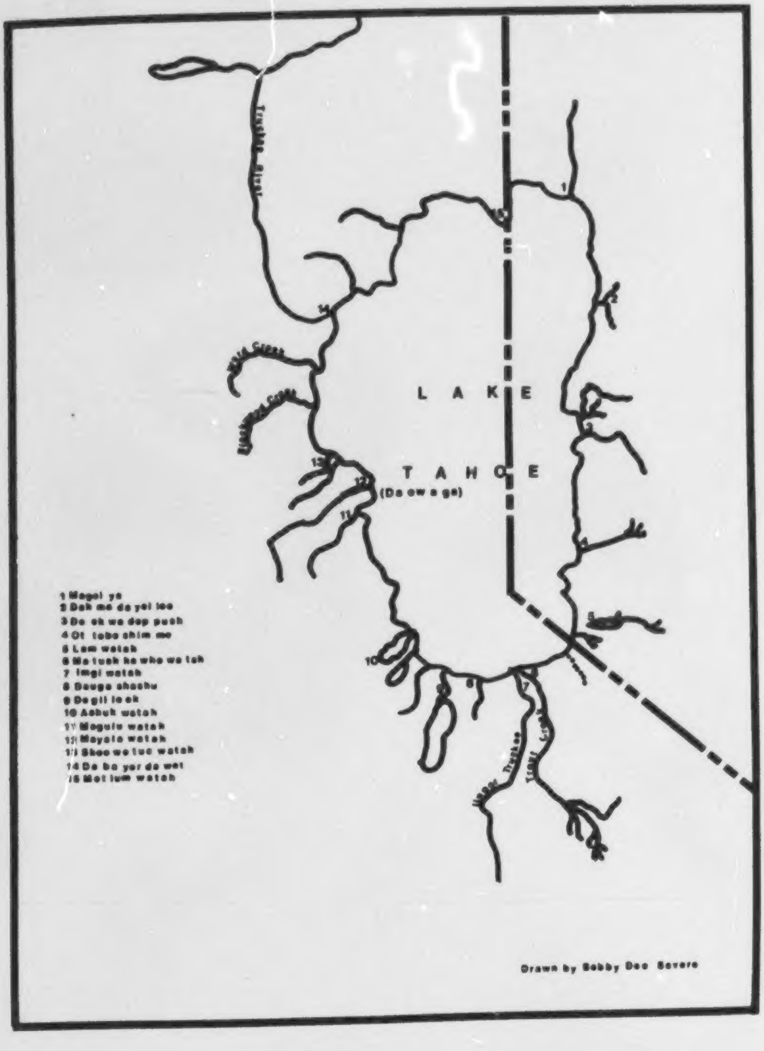
As soon as the weather permitted, the Washo began their annual journey to Lake Tahoe. The Washo lived around the lake and referred to it as *Da ow a ga,* which means "edge of the lake." White people who mispronounced *Da ow* as "Tahoe" gave the lake its English name. *Da ow a ga* was the central point for many Washo activities. The pure waters of the high mountain lake offered them more than simple material benefits. *Da ow a ga* was "the life-sustaining water, the center of the Washo world." The waters of the sacred lake "breathed life" into the land, the plants, the fish, the birds, the animals, and the people around it.[8]

The spring trip to *Da ow a ga* was the most important gathering for the whole tribe. When the Washo reached the lake, they "blessed the water and themselves because they had come to a sacred place. *Da ow* was the giver of life; it fed fish, animals and humans."[9] Washo families came from all parts of their territory to meet at the lake and reaffirm tribal unity. While the people fished and gathered plants, the *deu bay u* (leaders) of each group met to establish rules, set guidelines, and exchange information.[10] Throughout the summer, the leaders met often to discuss many important aspects of Washo life. They appointed "bosses" to scout for the areas where food was most plentiful. These "bosses," gifted individuals who possessed special knowledge, searched for locations where particular foods, like acorns, deer, or pine nuts, were abundant that year. Since food was not always available in the same location year after year, the Washo relied on the "bosses' " reports.[11]

When the people came to *Da ow a ga* each group lived in an assigned area. The *Wel mel ti* usually camped on the north shores of the lake, the *Hung a lel ti* on the south, and the *Pau wa lu* on the east and southeast.[12] Each group was careful not to cross into the area assigned to another group. The Washo respected the land they lived on. Since they did not abuse their campsites, when the Washo left the area, it was as if no one had been there.[13]

At *Da ow a ga* the Washo had a number of established campsites. At the northeast end of the lake, the *Wel mel ti* camped at a site called *Ma goi ya,* where they could catch fish and gather foods like wild rhubarb. To reach *Ma goi ya,* the *Wel mel ti* used a trail which led from Washo Valley. On the eastern shore, the *Pau wa lu* camped at *Dah ma da yel lee,* fishing and gathering berries and seeds. Indian doctors travelled to the site at *De eķ wa dop push* to meditate. At this site, water babies lived in an underground cave. A monster also lived in a cave in the area. At *Ot tobe shim me,* fish, especially trout and white fish, were plentiful. There, the Washo also gathered locusts which they cooked and ate. The *Pau wa lu* and the *Hung a lel ti* fished at *Lam Watah.* Berries, like *shoo we tuc* (buckberry) and *sah wood yagul* (gooseberry) grew in the area.[14]

A number of campsites were clustered at the southern end of the lake. The *Pau wa lu* and the *Hung a lel ti* used *Ma tush ha who wa tah,* catching plentiful whitefish. At *Imgi Watah,* the Washo caught cutthroat trout which were large enough to pull a man into the water. The Washo caught only the male fish (*Dah bah tha ge*), leaving the females to spawn. Near *Dauga shashu,* the Washo had a


Truckee River
Ward Creek
Blackwood Creek
L A K E
T A H O E
(Da ow a ga)
Upper Truckee
Trout Creek
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
1 Magol ya
2 Dah me da yel loo
3 Da ok wa dap push
4 Ot tobo shim me
5 Lam watah
6 Ma tush ha who wa tah
7 Imgi watah
8 Dauga shashu
9 Dagil le ok
10 Aabuk watah
11 Maguis watah
12 Mayala watah
13 Shoo wa luc watah
14 Da ba yor da wet
15 Mat lum watah
Drawn by Bobby Dee Severe

number of campsites. Many of the pounding rocks they used to prepare pine nuts, acorns, and seeds remain in this area. Trout were caught there and at *De gil le ek*. According to legend, because *Damollale* killed the water baby at *De gil le ek*, the water there runs red all year long.[15]

On the west side of *Da ow a ga,* Washo camped at places like *Ashuk Watah,* where the water falls run into Emerald Bay. Many fights took place between the Washo and the *Tan eu* (California Indians) who trespassed in the area. *Magulu Watah* was a good fishing spot which also had plentiful wild rhubarb, strawberries, and raspberries. *Mayala Watah,* which had many trout, also provided several kinds of medicinal plants which could not be gathered anywhere else. Near the campsite, the Washo and the *Tan eu* fought. Although the *Tan eu* thought they had surprised the Washo, a Washo man saw the strangers. He warned the Washo that the *Tan eu* were hiding. The women and children, who acted as if nothing were wrong, started to walk away. The Washo, instead of being taken unaware, were well-prepared when the *Tan eu* attacked. At S*hoo we tuc Watah,* the Washo gathered the *shoo we tuc* berry which grew abundantly, as well as *se let ta hu* (tiger lily) seeds and sunflower seeds. The Washo camped below *Da ba yor da wet,* the area where the Truckee River leaves *Da ow a ga*. There, they caught plentiful trout, hunted groundhogs, and found abalone in the river. On the northern shore, *Wel mel ti* fished in the stream at *Mot lum Watah,* gathering the berries and wild rhubarb which were

The Washo travelled to Da ow a ga *each spring to hunt, fish, and gather plants. The spring meeting was also a social gathering for the tribe. From time immemorial, the Washo came to the lake every year. The advent of the white man disrupted the spring trip to* Da ow a ga *as well as many other aspects of Washo life. (Courtesy of Amy James).*

plentiful in the area. All of the campsites around *Da ow a ga* had pounding rocks which the Washo used to prepare food. At each campsite, the Washo camped near, but not next to, the water.[16]

In the spring, the Washo caught the plentiful fish which travelled up the streams to spawn. *Da ow a ga* and the surrounding streams provided many varieties of fish. Several different kinds of trout were common in Washo territory.[17] The fish remained abundant year after year because the Washo did not deplete the population. When they fished, they were careful not to disrupt nature's reproductive cycles.

Throughout the year, the Washo used many different techniques to catch fish. Along the river banks where willows were abundant, fish blinds were made by pulling the willows together. This produced shaded places which attracted the fish. The Washo fished with bone hooks, and used willow spears with bone points. They trapped fish in large, conical baskets with funnel-shaped entrances. The men also drove fish into nets strung across the streams. They constructed dams to divert streams from their original channels, trapping the fish in small pools. Fish were caught by hand, particularly in the fall when the water was low. During the winter, the Washo fished through holes broken in the ice.[18]

The Washo prepared the catch for eating or drying by cleaning the fish, splitting them open, and cooking them on hot coals. Small fish were cooked with coals in coarsely woven baskets, while larger fish were wrapped in sunflower leaves and placed under the coals or in large pits.[19] The Washo also dried fish for later use. Dried fish was eaten as it was, boiled, or pounded and added to other foods.

Plants, like fish, could be gathered in Washo land throughout the year. Summer, however, was the most important time for collecting them. Many varieties grew throughout the area. Since they ripened at different times and places, the Washo had to know when and where they could be found. Because some plants could only be gathered for a short time, the people had to know exactly when they would mature.[20] The Washo gathered many plants, including the following:

Tiger lily seeds
Sand seeds
Wild mustard
Sego lily
Cat tails
Tule roots

- Wild spinach
- Wild potatoes
- Wild rhubarb
- Wild sweet potatoes (two varieties)
- Wild celery
- Wild turnips
- Currants
- Wild onions (many varieties)
- Elderberries
- Sunflower seeds
- Sweet elderberry roots
- Gooseberries
- Chokecherries
- Buckberries
- Wild Strawberries
- Raspberries
- Wild rose tea
- Indian tea

Knowing the location of so many plants and the times they would ripen required accurate observation. Each generation passed this information to the next.

Different foods were plentiful in each part of Washo territory. As the Washo followed the seasons, they gathered plants throughout their land. The *Wel mel ti* area in Washo Valley between Reno and Carson City, which the Washo called *Tso ya da ow* (Cat-tail Lake), contained abundant tules, wild onions, rhubarb, chokecherries, gooseberries, and currants.[21] *Hung a lel ti* gathered wild sweet potatoes, rhubarb, and several kinds of wild onions.[22] In *Pau wa lu* land, elderberries grew around the Genoa foothills.[23] Currants and buckberries grew along the Carson River. In Carson Valley, sand seeds and wild mustard seeds were abundant. Near Dresslerville, the *Pau wa lu* gathered wild onions. In the high area near Lake Tahoe, different kinds of plants flourished. There, the Washo gathered wild raspberries and strawberries, tiger lily seeds, sunflower seeds, wild rhubarb, and other plants. Gathering these plants took a great deal of time and energy. With digging sticks and seed baskets, Washo women and children collected large quantities of foods.[24]

The Washo ate some plants as soon as they gathered them; others were prepared for winter use. The Washo used different parts of each plant: seeds, bulbs, stalks, leaves, and roots could all provide foods and medicines. Many plants required special treatment before they could be eaten. Wild seeds had to be cleaned in winnowing baskets, parched with hot coals, and pounded into flour. Nuts had to be cooked and made into a flour which would keep for several months. Later, this flour could be made into soup or mush.[25] The Washo also gathered salt to use as a seasoning and to trade with other tribes. One popular salt source was in Antelope Valley near Topaz, California.[26]

When they left *Da ow a ga* in the fall, the Washo moved to the Pine Nut Hills to gather one of the most important foods, the *tah gum* (pine nuts). The occasion, which brought all the Washo groups together, was one of the major events in the Washo year. The families travelled to the Pine Nut Hills, which formed an arc around the eastern edge of Washo land. Pine nut trees grew from Virginia City, Nevada, south to the area of Coleville, California. The most important forests were located near the southeast edge of *Pau wa lu* territory, in the sacred Pine Nut Mountains. The hills, which figure in Washo legends, have always belonged to the Washo people. Since they have always considered the pine nut lands sacred, the Washo have tried to preserve this valued part of their land.

When the pine nuts ripened, the *deu bay u* (leader) called a special ceremony. He sent out a runner who carried a knotted buckskin rope to all the Washo camps. The runner avoided eating salt so that he would have a strong voice and be able to run long distances without tiring. Each knot in the rope represented one day; if there were five knots, the gathering would begin in five days.[27] When the people arrived at the Pine Nut Hills, the *goom sa bye* (ceremony) began. The Washo held the *goom sa bye,* which usually lasted four or five days, to give thanks to the Maker.[28] Throughout the gathering, the different groups shared plentiful food. During the daytime, the groups played many games, including footraces, handgames, and ballgames. In the evenings, men and women joined in dances. During the dances, they carried the tools they would use to pick and prepare the *tah gum.*[29] On the fourth day, the *deu bay u* prayed to give thanks to the Maker for the *tah gum* and the other foods he had provided. In this prayer, the *deu bay u* also asked the people to have kind thoughts, share the food with each other, and leave some food for the Maker who had given it to them. The *goom sa bye* ended with a symbolic cleansing; the Washo went to a stream and bathed to show that they had cleaned their spirits as well as their bodies.

When the *goom sa bye* ended, the Washo began picking *tah gum*. Sometimes they collected *tah gum* for a month to six weeks, using a long pole with a curved or hooked tip to knock down the cones. They gathered the cones in burden baskets, carried them back to camp, and prepared them for eating. Some *tah gum* were stored in pits lined with stone or grass, where they could be kept through the winter. If one year's harvest were poor, *tah gum* stored in the ground the previous year could provide food for the people.[30] Before a family cooked any of the newly gathered crop, they prayed that the nuts would be good and would not make anyone sick.

Tah gum could be prepared in several ways. Because the cones were filled with pitch, they were roasted in slow fires. When the heat opened the cones, the Washo picked the nuts from them. Then the Washo cooked some of the *tah gum* with hot coals in winnowing baskets. They cracked and removed the shells, using a portable metate or *dim git* and a mano or *gom-mum*.[31] After they cracked the shells, the Washo sifted the kernels from them in the same winnowing baskets. Finally, they ground the *tah gum* into flour. This flour, which formed an essential part of the Washo diet, was made into soup. Sometimes, the Washo cooked pine nuts in long troughs dug along the sandy banks of the river. When the fire was hot, they placed the nuts in the pit. Ten to twenty burden baskets of nuts could be cooked in one of these troughs.[32]

The Washo also travelled over the mountains in the fall to gather *mal lung* (acorns) in California. The *Wel mel ti,* who gathered *mal lung* near Colfax and Auburn, used a trail which ran from Squaw Valley to Sacramento Valley to reach the *mal lung* areas and trade with California Indians.[33] The *Pau wa lu* and *Hung a lel ti* travelled to the black oak groves on the western side of the Sierras, gathering *mal lung* in the groves near the Tuolumne, Cosumnes, Calaveras, and American Rivers. They picked the *mal lung* off the ground and gathered them in large burden baskets. Then they relayed the heavy baskets back to Washo Country, stopping at camps they had established along the trail. The *mal lung,* which could be stored through the long winters, provided a staple food for the Washo.[34]

Mal lung, like *tah gum* and seeds, were cracked open. The Washo removed the red skins by sprinkling the acorns with water and winnowing them in a special basket. They laid the shelled and cleaned *mal lung* in the sun to dry. When the *mal lung* had dried, the Washo used a large, permanent mortar, or *lam,* and a pestle, or *bit sik,* to grind them into a fine flour. The large *lam* were found at Washo sites around Lake Tahoe and throughout Washo country. With a sifting basket and a special soaproot brush, the Washo sifted the flour, separating the coarser flour so it could be pounded again. Finally, they poured water through cedar boughs to leach the flour and remove the bitter taste. Then the flour could be made into soup or "acorn biscuits." To make the biscuits, the Washo mixed the acorn flour with water in a special round-bottomed cooking basket. They cooked the mixture by adding six or seven heated stones with a special stirring stick. Then they dipped the cooked mixture in cold water to make the biscuits.[35]

Fall was the most important hunting season, since the animals were healthiest and fattest at that time. The Washo hunted many animals, including rabbits, ground hogs, mountain goats, antelope, sagehens, quail, woodchucks, prairie dogs, waterfowl, and deer. The Washo killed animals for food; they never took life needlessly or wasted what they had taken. They hunted the best animals, those which would provide the most food and material. Before they hunted, the men observed an inviolable Washo custom. Early in the morning they bathed and prepared themselves with sagebrush so that the animals would not smell them.[36] When they killed an animal, they prayed to the Maker, thanking him for the gift of food and asking forgiveness for taking a life.

Different animals could be hunted throughout Washo territory. The *Wel mel ti* travelled to the Sierras to hunt in places like Squaw Valley, south of Truckee, California, where game was plentiful. In *Pau wa lu* land, mountain sheep abounded near Job's Peak and the Pine Nut Mountains east of Carson Valley. Rabbits, ducks, and geese were plentiful in the valley. Antelope and deer, as well as small game animals, were numerous. The *Hung a lel ti's* land was an excellent hunting region, filled with mountain goats, antelope, and deer. Hope Valley contained many ground hogs and woodchucks. Quail and sagehen were plentiful near the Blue Lakes.[37]

The Washo's basic hunting weapons were bows and arrows. They made arrows in many sizes, in proportion to the size of the game. Although arrows could be made from any hard wood, the Washo often used wild rose shoots[38] because they were straight and strong. Arrows were tipped with flint or obsidian points.[39]

Successful hunting, however, required knowledge and skill as well as weapons. Hunters knew the animals' habits, the weather, the terrain, and many stalking methods. They disguised themselves and imitated animal sounds, like the cry of a fawn in distress. The Washo used a number of techniques to catch the various animals.[40] Often they set up nets and drove animals, like quail and rabbits, into them. They held duckling drives at Washo Lake. They set up blinds, built of rocks or brush, near the animals' watering holes. To catch sagehen, which danced in some areas during their mating season, the hunters set up blinds. Before sunrise, the hunter covered himself with dirt and brush for camouflage. Concealed in his blind, the man waited for the birds to begin dancing. Other animals were caught with traps, like the willow-pole snares the Washo made to catch prairie dogs. Some animals, which were relatively tame, could be caught without much effort. In the fall, mudhens were fat and unable to fly. Grouse, which were very tame, could be clubbed on the head or shot easily. The Washo chased groundhogs in the rocks and speared them.[41]

The deer was one of the most important animals, since it provided a great deal of food and clothing. Every part of the animal was used in some way.[42] The meat could be cooked over coals, roasted, dried, or made into jerky for winter use. The Washo made blood sausage by filling the animal's stomach with blood, tying it shut, and roasting it over coals.[43] The rest of the deer gave the Washo many materials. The neck, which is tough and strong, was made into moccasins. The spinal cord provided thread; needles were made from the leg bone. In the spring or fall, the Washo soaked the hides in cold water and used a scraper made of shoulder bones to remove the hair. They softened the hides with the deer's brains and tanned them with the smoke from cedar wood. The tanned hides could be used to make many kinds of clothing.[44]

Rabbits, like deer, supplied a great deal of food and clothing. The best time to hunt rabbits was in the fall, when their pelts were thick.[45] Before a rabbit drive, the "rabbit boss" called a special ceremony. Each area had its own boss, who inherited his position and the authority to tell everyone when and where to hunt. At the ceremony, the Washo thanked the Maker for this food and ensured a plentiful supply of rabbits by offering a special dance and prayer.

Many men joined in these drives, which were held in all the lowland areas of Washo country, like Washo Valley and Eagle Valley, where rabbits were plentiful. To catch the rabbits, the Washo set up nets made from plant fiber. Individuals owned the nets, which were more than twenty to fifty feet wide and three to six feet high; the small nets were tied together to form a larger net. As the hunters drove the rabbits toward this large net, they killed some with bows and

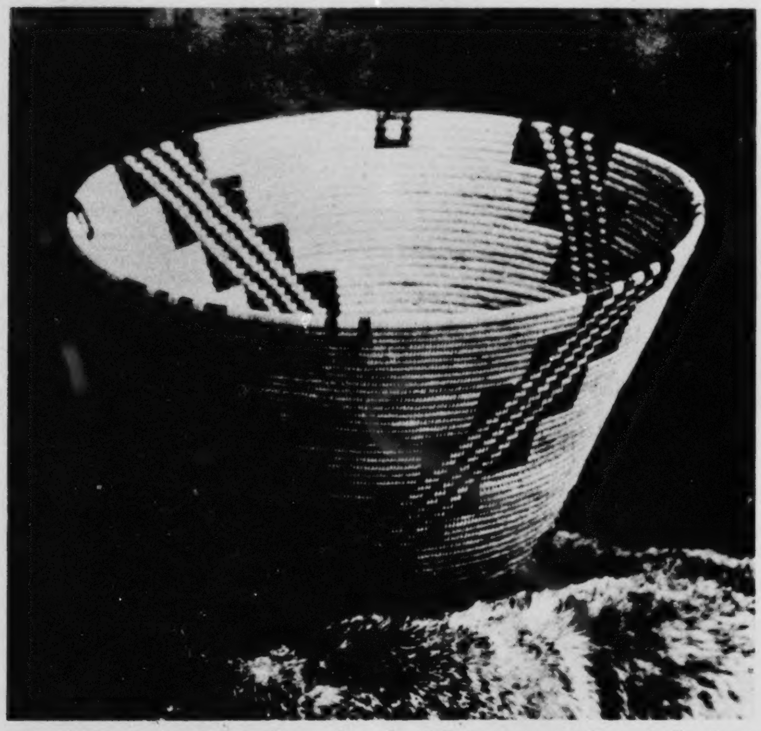
Rabbits provided more than food. The Washo used the soft pelts to make warm blankets. (Courtesy of Dr. Warren L. d'Azevedo).

arrows. Others became entangled in the nets and were clubbed to death. Respecting a Washo law, the men left some rabbits in the sagebrush for hunters who were old or ill.[46] Several rules governed the hunt and the distribution of rabbits; a hunter who violated these rules would find his luck changed.

No part of the rabbit was wasted. After the hunt, the Washo gutted and skinned the animals. Then they cooked and ate the meat or dried it for later use. Dried meat could be pounded into a flour which was added to pine nut soup or seed mush. The soft bones were crushed, stored, and eaten later. The pelts made soft, warm blankets, which were also used as capes. Many skins were needed to make a single blanket; in each drive, the Washo killed hundreds of rabbits to supply the people with food and clothing for the winter.[47]

When winter came, little food could be gathered; the Washo had to rely on food stores collected earlier in the year. Sometimes a warm spell, called *om suk nung a,* allowed the Washo to hunt and fish during the winter, but they could not depend on this "pretend spring." The people spent the winter months making and repairing tools, clothing, and houses. They established a number of winter campsites. Many *Wel mel ti* camped at Steamboat Springs, near the south end of the Truckee Meadows, in an area they called *Wel ga nuk.*[48] *Wel mel ti* also camped around the springs in Eagle Valley near Carson City. Sometimes, if mountain snows became too deep, Washo who had travelled to California remained there during the winter. The *Hung a lel ti,* who lived in the mountains, often had to travel even in heavy winter snows. When John Fremont saw these Washo in 1846, he commented on their proficiency with snow shoes.[49] With their snow shoes, the *Hung a lel ti,* who were known as the traders within the tribe, could travel even in winter.

The Washo built several kinds of houses, including one main dwelling for summer and one for winter. They made the summer house, or *gadu,* from materials which were plentiful in the area where it was built. A *gadu* built along a river bank, for example, would be made of willows. The winter house, or *galis dungal,* had to be sturdier than the *gadu* and required more time to build. Winter houses had to be prepared before cold weather and deep snows came.[50] Although the *galis dungal* were usually conical, the Washo sometimes built round ones. Like the summer homes, winter houses were made from material abundant in the area and always faced the east. To build the main frame of *galis dungal,* the Washo placed poles in the ground securely. The tops of the poles, which could be more than sixteen feet high, were tied together. Long willows and pine poles were added to strengthen the frame. Then the Washo covered the frame with cedar bark, pine boughs, or manzanita. They placed bark on the frame, starting at the bottom and working toward the roof, which was covered with the same materials. A second layer of brush and tree branches added to the house gave further protection from wind and cold. Inside, the Washo built a fire pit enclosed with rocks, which kept the home warm and could be used



The Washo used three willows to make tightly-woven baskets of the finest quality. Washo basketmakers, using fern root and redbud, wove designs into the baskets. (Courtesy of the Nevada Historical Society).

for cooking. A hole in the middle of the roof allowed the smoke to escape.[51]

Women usually spent the winter months making baskets. Earlier in the year, they gathered the materials they would need. Basketmaking required a great deal of time, effort, and patience. Collecting the materials and supplies took the whole year; making the baskets took months because the women refused to hurry or make them carelessly. Baskets had many uses; different kinds of baskets were made in various shapes and sizes for different purposes. Water jugs and cooking baskets were the most finely woven. These baskets, woven with the method called "three willows," had intricate designs. Tightly woven baskets held water; loosely woven ones, like those used to carry pine nuts, served as burden baskets. These were coarsely woven, using only one willow. Heated rocks (specially chosen so that they would not crumble when hot) and food were placed in tightly woven cooking baskets. Food was eaten from water-proof basket bowls. Baskets used for gathering seeds were woven more tightly than burden baskets, but not as finely as cooking ones.[52]

These Washo women display their baskets. Each basketmaker created the designs woven into her baskets. (Courtesy of Stella Nevers).

During the year, the women gathered their materials: willows, used for the main part of the baskets; the inner bark from the willow, used for thread; redbud stalks, which made decorative thread; and fern roots, soaked in black mud, which made dark designs.[53] When they had collected their materials, the women stripped the bark from the willows and split the stalks in three ways, using their fingernails and teeth. They sorted the willows according to size and use. Small willows were put aside for the hoods of baby baskets, larger ones for other baskets. Later, they stripped off the bark and used flint scrapers to shape the willow splints. The stripped willows were coiled in bunches until the weaver was ready to begin.[54]

As the women worked, they kept the willows moist, since wet willows were easier to weave. For the finely-woven three-willow baskets, the women used a deer bone awl to make small holes in the splints that the willow thread could go through. Many baskets had intricate designs woven into them. Thread made from redbud splints and blackened fern roots, added color to the geometrical patterns. Some designs, like those on baby baskets, were traditional: a boy's basket had either straight lines or one unbroken zigzag line across the hood; a girl's had diamond or half-diamond shapes. Other designs were created by the basketmakers. No one ever copied anyone else's patterns.[55]

As the winter drew to an end, the Washo prepared for spring. Once again the annual cycle began. The Washo waited eagerly for the early plants, the spawning fish, and the young animals. They watched the signs of the new year in the land they knew so well. They gave thanks for bounty and prepared for times when the land was frugal. Staying close to the earth which fed and clothed them, the Washo lived in harmony with their land.

Geh Sha
(Washo Life)

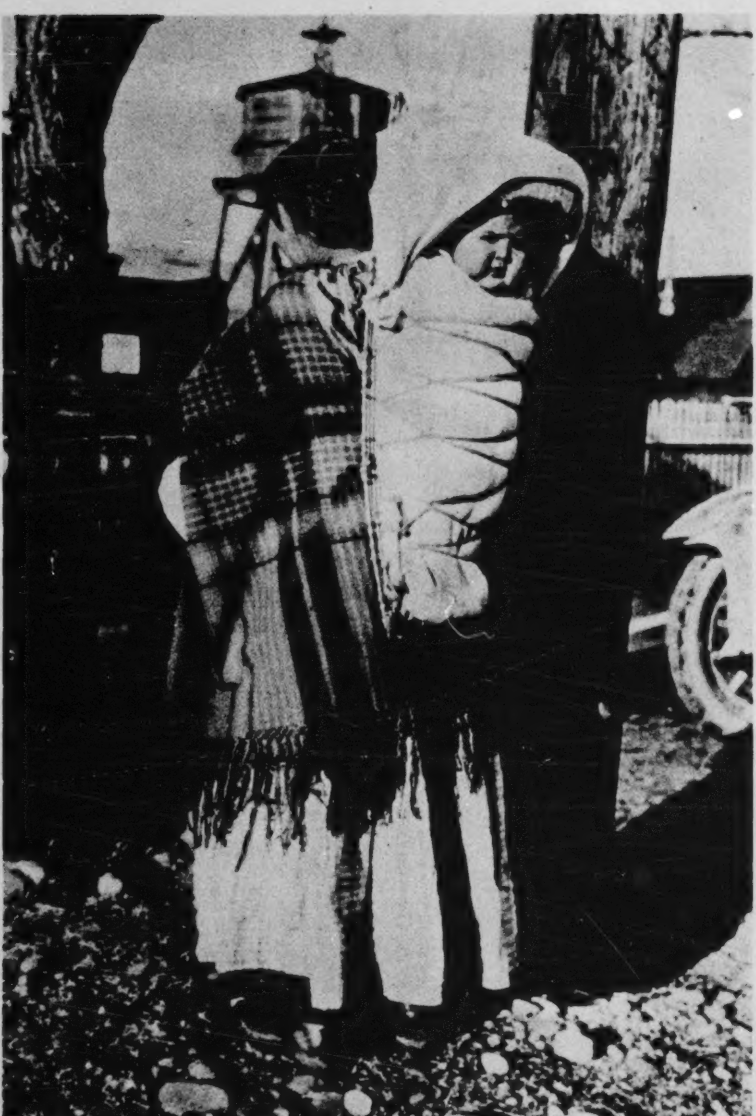
Within this seasonal cycle, another cycle unfolded for the Washo. At his birth, each child came, as his ancestors had come, to Washo lands. He became a part of a people, shared their activities, and learned his place in the Washo world. Throughout his life, he took part in seasonal activities, hunting, gathering, and fishing. The Washo people welcomed his arrival; as he grew they celebrated the changes in his life.

Although the Washo were divided into three main groups, they saw themselves as one people, distinct from neighboring tribes. As they stated in their Claims Case: "The Washo are distinguished by their culture, including their language, religion, and mythology, from that of surrounding tribes and the tribal unity of the Washo extends back into prehistoric times. . . . Archaelogical evidence . . . indicates that the Washo Tribe occupied one general geographical area as a separate group of people continuously for about two thousand years prior to the advent of the white man."[1] Their language set them apart from their Nevada neighbors, who belonged to the Uto-Aztecan language family. The Washo, who were Hokan speakers, had been separated from other groups of the Hokan family. The Washo's small numbers and the desirability of their lands also forced them to unify to protect their territory.[2] Seasonal activities, like the spawning runs at Tahoe in the spring and the pine nut crop in the fall, brought the whole tribe together several times a year. Many smaller groups also met during the year. All Washo bands met and exchanged goods. As they travelled to find plants, fish, and game, the people met each other in familiar gathering areas and on the many trails throughout their territory.

The Washo did have some contact with other tribes. The *Hung a lel ti,* who were known as the traders in the tribe, travelled to California to trade. They visited the territories of the Miwok, Mono, and other California Indians. Sometimes, the Washo travelled as far as the Pacific Ocean to gather sea shells. They also travelled to California to gather acorns. Since the *Hung a lel ti* lived so close to the California Indians, fights frequently arose. When Washo visited California, they often moved at night to avoid conflict with local tribes.[3] If the California Indians, whom the *Hung a lel ti* called *Tan eu,* ventured too far into Washo territory, the Washo fought them. *Tan eu* often invaded Washo land to kill people and kidnap slaves. The Washo tattooed themselves, using acorn juice and burnt rabbit brush mixed with water, so that they could identify a person's family or clan. If the *Tan eu* captured a Washo, his people could identify the kidnapped person by the tatoos on his face or arms.[4] When they went to war with the *Tan eu,* the Washo performed a war dance and painted themselves with chalk and grease from the inside of a cooked deer leg. The Washo, who were good marksmen, ran with their long strong bows held in front of them. They used war arrows tipped with flint which had three magpie feathers on the shaft. When one group penetrated too far in another tribe's territory, fierce battles were fought.[5]

Within the Washo tribe, many ceremonies marked important events in an individual's life. Many customs, legends, and traditions were passed from one generation to the next. When a Washo child was born, he was welcomed. Since the Washo regarded each new child as a gift, birth was an important event. Celebration and prayer greeted the child, welcoming him to the Washo world. His parents showed their gratitude for this blessing by giving gifts to others.[6] Both parents observed customs which marked the child's birth. The father took a ritual bath; the mother ate neither salt nor meat for a month.[7] The child and his mother were blessed and the baby was placed in a special scoop-shaped baby basket.[8] When he was a month old, the family held another ceremony to bless him. The parents hoped that many people would attend this celebration so that they could show how thankful they were.[9]

As the child grew, his family cared for him. They made larger baskets as he needed them.[10] When the child could talk, he was named.[11] The Washo insisted that children listen to their parents and grandparents. Children learned to respect their elders, who taught them about the world and their way of life. The elders also taught the children, through Washo stories, that they should behave



Washo mothers carried their children in bic koosh *(cradleboards). This picture, taken in the 1920's, shows Margaret Wade with her son, Duane. Many Washo still use the* bic koosh. *(Courtesy of the Nevada Historical Society).*

and never cause trouble. Since the children learned these lessons, which were stressed from early childhood, adults did not need to spank children to make them behave.[12] As they grew, children were taught the tasks and techniques they needed to know.

The family was the main unit of the Washo world. To survive, family members had to work together efficiently. Washo activities, like fishing, hunting, and gathering, which revolved around the nature of the land and the time of the year, could not be taken casually. Each family member learned his role in these important activities.[13] Each Washo had to be familiar with the seasons, the climate, and the soil. The Washo learned the habits of all the animals, birds, and fish in their land. They had to distinguish edible plants from poisonous ones. They had to know how to make and repair the tools they needed to gather food, prepare meals, and build homes. Without this knowledge, the Washo could not have survived.

Hunting was the most important part of a boy's training. When he was still young, the boy's father and grandfather began to instruct him. First the boy learned to hunt squirrels and other small animals. As he gained experience, he was allowed to hunt birds, larger game animals, and finally deer. His father and grandfather taught him stalking methods, animal habits, and hunting techniques. Whenever the boy killed a first animal, he gave the food away; he was not allowed to eat any of his first kills. When he became an expert shot and knew all the Washo hunting methods, he was permitted to kill his first buck.[14]

After the boy shot his first deer, he was considered a man. A special ceremony marked his transition to adulthood. The antlers of his first deer were placed on the ground with the points down. If he could crawl through the antlers without touching them, he would have good luck in future hunts. After he crawled through the antlers, his father or grandfather gave him the ritual bath. Then the boy was blessed and recognized as a man. From that time on, he and his family could eat any game he killed. Both the boy's education and the ceremony which marked his first deer stressed the importance of a man's ability to provide food for himself and his family.[15]

A special ceremony also marked a young girl's passage to womanhood. When the girl became a woman, her parents held a puberty dance which was one of the most important ceremonies observed by Washo women. The girl's training and dance stressed the tasks which were important for Washo women. The girl fasted for four days before the ceremony. Each girl fasted strictly, since what she did during this time had great bearing on her future life and health. If she failed to keep the fast, she would go hungry in later life. If she fasted well, she would have the strength to gather much food and would enjoy a long life. During the fast, the girl was expected to keep busy with her daily chores, setting the pattern she would follow for the rest of her life.[16]

On the fourth night, the young woman climbed to the top of a mountain with one of her relatives. The *Pau wa lu* used Job's Peak for the girl's ceremony. On the mountain top, the girl and her companion lit four fires, which could be seen for miles. These fires announced the event to the people and invited everyone to share in the dance and ceremony which followed. During the dance, the girl carried an elderberry pole painted red. This pole, which she used for support as she went through the dance with another girl, was hidden in the mountains later. The pole, which represented her life, was planted upright so that she would remain strong. At sunrise the next morning, the girl faced the east. She was blessed, prayed for, and given the ritual bath by her grandmother. The basket which had been used to pour the bath water over her was thrown to the crowd for someone to catch and keep. The entire ceremony, like the boys' celebration, showed how precious human life was to the Washo.[17]

When young men and women had been recognized as adults, they were ready for marriage. Often, marriages were arranged at the spring gathering at Lake Tahoe. The young people's parents considered the qualities of the proposed mate carefully: a man had to have a good character and be a successful hunter, while a woman had to be virtuous and energetic. After both families had considered the match, the parents exchanged gifts. If both families accepted the gifts, an established period of time allowed the couple to prepare for marriage. After this period, which usually lasted about a year, the young people were married.[18]

Throughout his life, the Washo enjoyed many group activities. He met other members of his tribe while hunting and gathering and during special ceremonies. At these gatherings, like the spring meeting at Lake Tahoe, the Washo played a number of games.

Men played a football game in which two teams tried to kick a small buckskin ball through a goal. The five or six man team which scored the first goal won the game. Two teams also tried to kick balls through a goal in the men's ball race. The teams lined up in straight lines at right angles to the goal, which was marked by twin sticks. When the game began, the team member farthest from the goal had his team's ball. Each team kicked the ball from man to man, trying to kick its ball to the goal first and win the race.[19]

Women played shinny in teams of four to seven people. The fifty to one hundred yard field had circular goals at either end. The players tried to move a piece of braided deer-hide rope with their sticks. The object was to move the rope into the goal without stepping on it or picking it up by hand. As in men's football, the first goal won the game.[20]

Both men and women had footraces, which began when one group challenged another. An individual ran into the other group's camp, carrying bets tied on sticks. A member of the second group brought bets to the first. Until the race began, the runners' identities were secret. To decorate themselves for the race, one group painted white marks on their bodies and wore eagle feathers, while the other used red paint. Contestants ran to a half-way mark and returned; often the races lasted for several hours. After the race, a female relative bathed the winner, throwing the basket to the crowd as in the girl's dance. Any member of the losing group could take the clothes the winner had worn.[21]

Archery contests, like the footraces, began with a challenge. Two teams shot at round sticks (about four feet high) placed at opposite ends of a field. Each of the two men was allowed three shots at the opposite goal. Contestants tried to score points by accurate shooting: a direct hit scored four points and an arrow closer to the goal than any of the opponents' arrows scored one. Eight to ten points won the game.[22]

Both men and women enjoyed playing the handgame, which the Washo called *hen na nowgi*. Two teams, each composed of six or more players, joined in the game. Each team received five sticks or counters, called *ba ladah,* which they used to keep score. Two people on each team were given bones, called *ik mam*. Each team had two marked and two unmarked bones. One team hid its bones, singing as they concealed the *ik mam*. Members of the other team had to guess the location of the unmarked bones. If they guessed one wrong, they gave the other team one *ba ladah*; if they missed both, they lost two counters. A team which collected all the counters from its opponents won the game.[23]

Washo craftsmen made both beautiful and useful objects. In addition to tools, arrows, fish traps, blankets, nets, houses, and baskets, they made necklaces from abalone shells, which they called *thil la ho ho mi* (abalone-like shells). They also cut, shaped, and polished bones from many animals and birds to make different kinds of necklaces.[24]

Prayer was an important part of Washo daily life. They thanked the Maker for food when they ate. After preparing food, they showed their appreciation by leaving some for the Maker. Before hunting they asked forgiveness for the life they had to take that day. Because all life was precious to them, the Washo were very religious.[25] All their activities reflected their respect and love for the earth. Daily tasks, like grinding pine nuts into flour, as well as important ceremonies, like those surrounding birth, honored the gift of life. The Washo prayed to the Maker when they washed their faces in the morning, asked for luck when hunting, and prayed for the animals they killed for food. When they gathered food, the Washo showed their respect for nature by leaving seeds, acorns, fish, and other life to reproduce.[26]

Special ceremonies also helped the individual throughout his life. If he were sick or troubled, the Washo sought the help of an Indian doctor (*Da mom lee*). A doctor did not choose his profession; he was called to it. He received a summons, often through persistent dreams; he could not ignore the gift or the powers that were given to him. Each doctor had a *wel gel lay you,* or source of power. The *wel gel lay you,* which symbolized the doctor's strength, was not prayed to or worshipped; it simply represented the doctor's powers.[27]

When a Washo was troubled by sickness or guilt, the doctor interceded for him. The doctor begged the Maker to give the sick person life, health, and strength. He asked the spirits who were waiting for the sick person to leave him alone and allow him to enjoy his life on earth.[28] The doctor asked the waiting ones not to take the sick person's breath away, but to restore his strength. The doctor prayed that the stricken Washo be forgiven for his mistakes.[29] Using the special powers he had been given, the doctor could help the Washo with both physical and psychological problems.

As a Washo grew older, he gained more and more respect from the members of the tribe. The people honored their elders, respecting their knowledge and wisdom. Older people, who made the fires, were always treated with reverence. They watched the children and taught them about life. They remembered the legends their parents and grandparents had taught them; in turn, they passed these legends on to their children and grandchildren. They taught the children much about Washo life and the world around them. The elders gave advice not only to children, but to everyone. They shared their knowledge and experience; in return, they were treated with dignity and honor. Elders were fed before anyone else ate. The Washo never passed an older person without speaking to him. In many ways, the Washo showed their gratitude to the old ones.[30]

Since all life was precious to the Washo, any death was a sorrowful occasion. Anyone's death brought hardship to the whole family, since each member had special responsibilities and tasks in the group. The Washo buried their dead, expressing their sorrow in a mourning period following the burial. Often female relatives cut their hair to show their grief. All Washo sympathized with those who had lost a loved one, showing their grief openly as they tried to console each other.[31]

When someone died, it was said that a rainstorm came to wipe out all the tracks and return everything to the way the Maker intended it to be.[32] In this way, nature marked an individual's death and allowed life to begin anew. For the living, seasonal activities continued. Plants ripened, children were born, and young people became adults. Sharing the gifts of the earth, the Washo lived in harmony with nature. Until the white man interrupted the natural cycles of their lives, the Washo lived in this way, honoring and respecting all life, for thousands of years.

Weh Hai Ge Ge A
(Washo Tradition)

Washo children learned a great deal about their people, their land, and their culture by listening to legends. The old people of the tribe told the stories, which they had heard from their parents and grandparents. Some legends explained how the Washo had come to the earth. The creation legends, however, made up only one part of Washo tradition. Other stories preserved important events in Washo history, described the geography of the area, provided entertainment, and helped to teach the young. As the stories passed from generation to generation, young Washo learned the same lessons their parents had.[1]

The stories, which were told before everyone went to sleep, often illustrated wise and unwise behavior. In most cases, the storytellers used animal characters. Using animal figures, which held the children's interest, the narrator could teach a lesson without irritating or offending anyone.

Legends taught young Washo many things they would need to know when they grew up. The tales explained the different kinds of food in Washo territory and showed the children how these foods were found and prepared. The stories taught the young people how to identify various medicines, find their sources, and prepare them. They listed remedies for insect bites and other illnesses. The legends also enumerated the features of Washo land. Listening to them, the children grew familiar with the lakes, streams, mountains, and valleys in Washo territory. Through the legends, young Washo learned to respect the land and all that lived within it.

Several legends explain how the Washo were created, how they came to their land, and why they were few in number. One legend tells why people were created with hands instead of paws:

Once, the coyote and the lizard argued about what people should be like. The coyote said that the people could dig in the ground for food with paws like his. The lizard disagreed, saying that people should have fingers like his. They argued and argued.

Finally, the coyote chased the lizard into a crack in a rock. The lizard stayed there, still saying that people should have hands. The coyote was furious; he decided to make a fire by the rock to drive the lizard out. The rock got hotter and hotter, and smoke filled the area. When the lizard spat on the rock, it made a sizzling noise. The coyote laughed, thinking that the lizard was being roasted, but the lizard wasn't dead. Finally, the lizard won the argument and people have hands, but even today the lizard is black and blue underneath because he was smoked in the coyote's fire.[2]

One Washo legend, which contains many incidents, recounts the adventure of *Pawetsile* (the weasel) and *Damollale* (the squirrel). In different parts of the story, which are comparable to chapters in a book, the weasel and the squirrel travel throughout Washo territory. The first incident explains how their journey began. The story opens in the southern part of Washo land, near the Wellington-Smith Valley area. *Damollale,* the mischevious one, and *Pawetsile,* the wise one, are eating the evening meal:

> Every day *Pawetsile* brought food home and prepared the evening meal. When the food was ready, he always hurried *Damollale* through the meal. The squirrel barely had time to finish his food when his brother ordered him to go to bed. After *Damollale* had gone to bed, *Pawetsile* took portions of food to his own bed, put out the lights, and began to whisper. This went on for many days, and *Damollale* grew worried that his brother would become ill. Each night it was the same: *Pawetsile* returned, prepared the meal, and rushed to bed.
>
> *Damollale* was determined to find out why his brother whispered to himself at night, so one day, when *Pawetsile* left to go hunting, *Damollale* feigned illness and refused to go with him. As soon as *Pawetsile* left, *Damollale* began to explore his brother's sleeping area. He discovered a duck and asked her what she was doing there. She told *Damollale* that *Pawetsile* had married her. *Damollale* replied that no one marries a duck. Since ducks were supposed to be eaten, *Damollale* killed and ate his brother's wife. He saved only the head, which he placed under his brother's pillow.
>
> That night, his brother returned and prepared dinner. Giving *Damollale* his portion, *Pawetsile* took his supper to his sleeping area,

put out the light, and began to whisper as usual. After several minutes, he quickly rekindled the light and discovered that only the duck's head remained. Hitting his little brother on the back with the duck's head, he asked him why he hadn't eaten the head as well.

Damollale began to pout; he refused to eat or get out of bed for ten days. Finally, his brother told him that he had received information from their uncle, the coyote, who did not have much longer to live. *Pawetsile* told his brother that their uncle wanted to see them once more before he passed on. So the weasel and the squirrel began the journey to Sacramento Valley.

Pawetsile and *Damollale* visited many places on their journey. At many of these sites, "chapters" in the legend record their experiences. One portion of the story tells how *Damollale* refused to go on another hunting trip and encountered a black widow spider:

The day began early for the two brothers. *Pawetsile* rose early, prepared a quick meal, and roused *Damollale*. He urged his brother to hurry so that they could begin to hunt before the animals were fully awake. *Damollale,* who had difficulty even opening his eyes to greet the new day, told his brother that he wanted to stay in bed a little longer, at least until mid-day. As far as he was concerned, there were no animals around. *Pawetsile* tried to rouse his brother, but eventually gave up the effort. He instructed *Damollale* not to stray too far from the camp, for there were many dangers a young person could encounter. *Damollale* promised not to leave the camp; he told his brother he would clean the campsite and do many other things. Hearing *Damollale's* promises, *Pawetsile* left to hunt.

As soon as *Pawetsile* was out of sight, *Damollale* began to play, straying further and further from the camp. He saw a den that intrigued him and began to explore its entrance. Looking in, he saw a black widow spider patiently weaving her web. The curious squirrel began to pester the spider, asking question after question. When *Damollale* thought she wasn't paying attention, he threw dirt at the web. The spider replied that she was minding her own business and he should mind his. She told him to leave her alone and play in the trees. But *Damollale* did not go away. Finally, when the spider completed her web, she began to explain how the web was made. Listening to the details, *Damollale* ventured deeper into the den. When he had come in far enough, the spider leaped over him, blocking the entrance. As he tried to escape, the black widow pounced on him and bit him. When *Damollale* died from her poison, the spider scraped the coals and ashes away from her fire and buried him in a hole. Then she replaced the rocks and coals so it looked as if nothing had been disturbed.

When *Pawetsile* returned to camp, he called his brother many times, but to no avail. Circling the camp, he picked up *Damollale's* tracks, which led straight to the spider's den. He asked the spider if she had seen his little brother, *Damollale*. She maintained that she had been working on her web all day and had seen no one. When *Pawetsile* told the spider that his brother's tracks came straight to the entrance of her den, she became very angry and shouted at the weasel. *Pawetsile,* who realized he would not get any answers from the black widow, returned to the campsite and began to pray.

He spoke to the Great Creator, who knows all, hears all, and sees all. When the weasel had explained his difficulties, a rainbow extended from the sky. A big voice, which came from all around, told the weasel to get on the rainbow. The moment the weasel climbed on the rainbow, he was brought before the Great Creator. The Spirit told the weasel that he knew what the black widow had done, and that it was not proper for anyone to lie to another individual. He gave *Pawetsile* a small pouch which contained tobacco and explained its proper use. Just before he sent the weasel back to earth, the Creator gave him the power to restore a life one time. Then he placed *Pawetsile* on the rainbow and carried him back to his campsite.

Pawetsile returned to the spider's den and asked the spider again if she had seen his little brother. The spider shouted that she had not seen anyone and if the weasel did not leave he would suffer the consequences. Then *Pawetsile* took out the tobacco pouch the Great Creator had given him and began to make a smoke. Growing more and more nervous, the spider jumped up into the corner of her den and asked the weasel not to light the smoke. The weasel questioned her once more, but she still maintained that she had not seen his little brother, so *Pawetsile* lighted the tobacco and began to puff on the smoke. Perspiring heavily, the spider jumped from corner to corner. Continuing to smoke, the weasel repeated his question at intervals. The spider answered that she had seen no one. Finally the weasel blocked the entrance to the den and puffed so hard on the tobacco that the room filled with smoke. Eventually, when the temperature got very hot, the spider popped and died.

The weasel, who had been told where his brother was, dug beneath the coals and lifted his little brother from the hole. He carried *Damollale* outside and placed his head toward the east, where the sun rises. Using the power vested in him by the Creator, *Pawetsile* stepped over his brother, saying *"Geahgesha,"* which means, "Live again." *Damollale* awoke, rubbing his eyes. The mischevious brother, who had never realized the serious consequences of disobeying his brother, told *Pawetsile* that he had had a good rest, and asked how long he had slept.

Using a legend like this, the old people taught the children many things. They told them about the Great Creator, a spirit greater than all of us. They explained how tobacco drew the poison out of the bite. The tale also showed natural events: a spider placed on a fire or a hot stove will pop. Finally, the story taught the young that it is not proper to lie and that small children should obey their elders.

Another legend about *Damollale* and *Pawetsile* explains how lakes were created. Like many Washo legends, it describes the features of the land. This story begins in the area south of Lake Tahoe, where the town of Meyers, California, now stands:

Pawetsile had just killed a deer. He told his brother, the mischevious one, to fetch some water from Lake Tahoe while he built a fire. When *Damollale* reached the lake, he saw a young water baby combing her long, beautiful hair. Looking at the water baby sitting on Cave Rock, he thought, "My brother always wanted long, beautiful hair like that." The water baby, who knew what he was thinking, said to him, "If you try to take my hair, the lake will swallow you." Then *Damollale* began to wrestle with the water baby. They rolled around the lake to the place on the south shore where the Little Truckee runs into the lake. There, *Damollale* killed the water baby. That is why the creek is always red.

When *Damollale* killed the water baby, the lake began to boil. As *Damollale* started up the mountain to escape, he pulled a strand of hair from the water baby's scalp. The lake advanced behind him; each time he plucked a hair it rose up and then receded. Finally *Damollale* reached Job's Peak, where his brother was. *Pawetsile* told him to give the water baby's hair back to the lake before the water swallowed them. *Damollale* protested, "But I thought you wanted her hair." Since by this time the water had reached their necks, *Pawetsile* insisted that his brother throw the hair back. Finally, he convinced his younger brother, who did what he was told. Then the lake returned to its original bed, but as it retreated it left water in all the depressions in the area. That is why there are many small lakes in the mountains near Lake Tahoe.[3]

Other Washo legends tell of monsters. Often, these monsters preyed on foolish individuals who acted improperly and did not heed the warnings of their people. Through these stories, the young learned to respect the wisdom of their elders; they also learned the proper ways to behave. One monster, *Hanuh wui-wui,* was part animal and part human. He had a human head, chest and arms, joined to an animal body, with four hooved feet. His name came from the grunting sound he made as he ran: *"Hanuh-wui! Hanuh-wui!"* The monster preyed on people who thought they were having a good time when they were actually neglecting their duty:

Often young parents left their children with grandparents and went to a meeting place to play games. They played cards until the small hours of the morning. The children's grandmother, an old woman, heard the noise of the monster approaching: *"Hanuh-wui! Hanuh-wui!"* She ran to the meeting place to warn the people that she heard the monster. The young people, however, laughed at her, telling her that she was old and her hearing was bad. She tried to explain to the reckless young people that if they did not return to care for the children, they would die soon. Failing to convince them, she returned to her home and the several young children in her care.

Hearing the sound of the monster, *"Hanuh-wui! Hanuh-wui!,"* the young people said the old woman was playing tricks on them.

For a moment, all was quiet. Then the young people laughed and continued their games. Suddenly the door burst open and *Hanuh wui-wui* appeared. As the people turned to look at the open door, *Hanuh wui-wui* said, *"Geh-tu-gui-ow-eti,"* which means, "Black out." When all the people died, the monster searched for others in the neighborhood, intending to kill them as well.

Meanwhile, the old woman had abandoned her home, running out into the sagebrush with the young children in her arms. She ran to the area near Double Springs Flat. The old woman found the largest sagebrush and pulled it out of the ground, leaving a big hole. She placed the children in this hole and climbed in after them, pulling the sagebrush over them by the roots. When she reached the bottom of the hole, she twisted her cane into the roots and laid the cane across the hole.

Inside the hole, the woman and the children could hear the monster approaching, *"Hanuh-wui! Hanuh-wui!"* Testing each of his senses, he said, *"Wah-geng-mugelic-got-tum-ooh-ech,"* which means, "It tastes as if the people are right down here." Grabbing the sagebrush, he pulled and pulled, but the cane at the bottom anchored the roots, and he could not pull the sagebrush up. Frustrated by this failure, he began to pull up all the other sagebrush in the area. Finally he had cleared an area about five hundred yards around the sagebrush that hid the woman and the children. Sometimes he went further outside the five-hundred-yard radius, tearing out all the sagebrush in the area except the one in the middle.

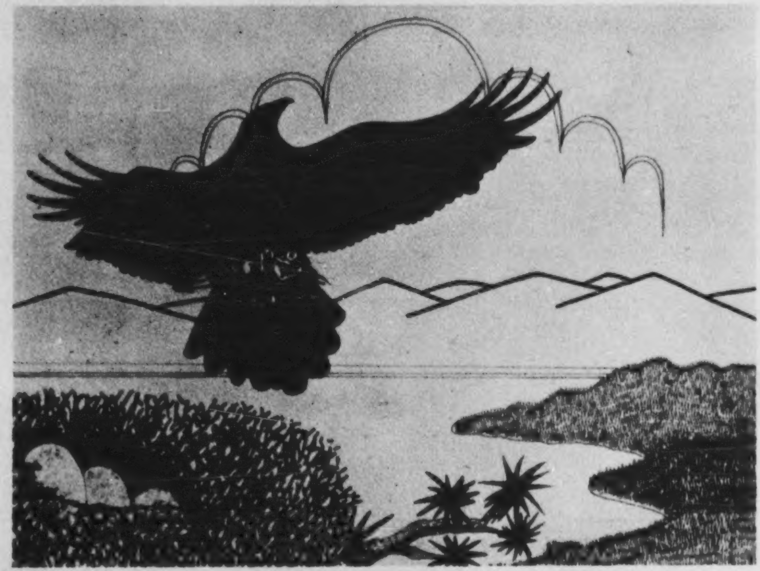
Trying to catch the old woman by surprise, he dashed back to the central sagebrush. Back and forth he ran. The old woman, wise in her ways, waited for him. Finally, after some time, she undid her cane when she heard him approach. When the monster grabbed the sagebrush and pulled with all his might, the brush slipped out easily since the cane no longer held it. *Hanuh wui-wui,* who had not expected this, fell backwards and killed himself. Then the woman took the children back to their camp.

Even today, in an area in the midst of the Washo allotments about fifteen miles south of Gardnerville, Nevada, there is a place on the Double Springs Flat where one large sagebrush looms above the rest.[4] The area is no longer completely bare, since the sagebrush has grown back over the years, but the one large sagebrush stands above everything in a six-hundred-yard radius. Listening to this legend, children learned the responsibilities that they would have as parents. They learned not to neglect their children or mock their elders. Another monster story tells of a man named Big Foot who lived in the mountains:

> Often Big Foot called out, *"Dahsh-shung-la-mong-ill-gish-iuk,"* which means, "Come and eat blood with me." Some people always went, lured to the monster's dinner by their curiosity. When they were seated, the monster dished out his soup, which was made of blood, human blood. If anyone complained, the monster singled him out as the next victim. Although he ranted and raved, saying that all the guests should leave, he had always chosen the next two victims in advance. He clubbed these two over the head, knocking them unconscious. Then the monster bled their throats, catching the blood in bowls for his next meal. In a few days, the monster called from the mountains again. The curious went to his dinner, and, as always, one or two did not return.

This story, which showed what could result from improper curiosity, reminded the people not to accept hand-outs. In another story, a monster who ate Washo is killed by a clever man:

> A long time ago, a monstrous bird called the *Ong* lived in a big nest in the middle of Lake Tahoe. This gigantic man-eating bird picked up unsuspecting Washo. These people, who had not heeded persistent warnings, ventured into open areas where the monster could easily see and capture them. The Washo greatly feared this monster, who was so powerful that the wind from his wings could bend the trees when he flew near shore.
>
> One day the *Ong* snatched a Washo and took him to the huge nest in the middle of the lake. The Washo pretended to be dead, but watched the *Ong* carefully all the time. Luckily, the monster was not very hungry and had another person to eat. As the Washo watched, he noticed that the *Ong* closed his eyes to chew. This curious habit gave the Washo an idea. Each time the monster took a bite and closed his eyes, the Washo threw several arrowheads into his mouth. By nightfall, all these arrowheads had made the beast very



The Ong, a monster bird, terrorized Washo at Lake Tahoe. (A Dorothy Nez drawing).

sick. As the monster moaned and groaned with pain, a terrible storm raged. By morning the *Ong* was dead, so the Washo pulled a feather from its tail. Using the feather as a boat, he reached shore and returned to his home.[5]

Legends also recall important events in Washo history. *Wel mel ti* in Washo Valley recall a tragic landslide in their area. They lived at the foot of the mountains, using a spring near present-day Bower's Mansion and travelling to Lake Tahoe on mountain trails. Slide Mountain, which looms above the valley on the west, figures in Washo legends. Tradition says that many years ago, long before the white man came, the sky became dark and the earth shook. When the mountain tumbled down, many Washo who lived at its base were buried beneath sand and dirt. The survivors left the area, which has been taboo to the Washo ever since.[6]

Some legends describe events that happened to young Washo. One tale recounts a daring feat performed by a young Washo boy:

On an ancient trail to California, there is a high rocky wall known as Eagle Rock. There, eagles nested. If a young boy could obtain eagle feathers from the nest, the people respected him.

One day a young Washo boy climbed up the rocky wall and lowered himself to the nest with a buckskin rope. Several young eagles remained in the nest, but the mother was gone. The boy collected the feathers, but he did not notice that the wind had increased, blowing his rope out of reach. Two dangers faced the boy. He could not leave the nest, since it was impossible to climb up, and jumping down meant certain death. When the mother eagle returned, she would surely fight him for disturbing her children. But the boy noticed that the young eagles had fairly strong wings, so he decided to tie them to his arms and jump. When he jumped, the eagles flapped their wings. In that way, the boy slowly fell to the trees below, where he landed unhurt.[7]

Another legend recalls the experiences of a young girl:

Once, a family sent their daughter out with a basket of acorns or pine nuts. They told her not to stop if a skunk called to her. Somewhere near Washoe Lake, she saw the skunk. When he whistled and called to her, she went to his house and the skunk married her. Later, she returned to her parents' home with many small skunks. Her parents were very angry with her and hit her because she smelled bad. After they punished her, they sent her out again. This time, she went to the place she was supposed to visit. When she saw the house, which was covered with deer hides, she dropped a pine nut. Then she married the son of the people there.[8]

Washo elders told their children and grandchildren legends like these for many centuries. The children, who listened closely to the interesting stories, learned a great deal about their world. As they followed the adventures of the animal characters, children received lessons which would help them throughout their lives. Characters in the legends, like the Washo people who told the stories, travelled through Washo land. As the children grew older, they remembered the legends they had heard in their childhood. When they had children of their own, they became the storytellers, passing the traditions to a new generation.

Da Gashu Weti
(White Faces)

Early in the nineteenth century, the first white intruders entered Washo lands. In the beginning, the Washo saw only a few strangers; soon, a steady stream of whites flowed across Washo lands. Eventually, most emigrants travelling to California used Washo hunting trails, including the routes over Donner Pass, Ebbets Pass, Silver Mountain, and Echo Summit. At first, the strangers posed only a distant threat to the Washo who lived in these areas; later, the Washo found their lands and lives disappearing beneath the flood of whites.

The Washo heard about the intruders before they saw them. Spanish priests and soldiers had established missions and forts in California. As their activity increased in California's central valley, tensions grew between the foreigners and the Indians. More and more Indians fled from contact with the Spanish, who wanted to remove them to coastal missions and convert them to Catholicism. Indians from many tribes escaped from the missions and hid in the mountains.[1] Retreating California Indians probably told the Washo about the Spanish invaders. What the Washo learned gave them no reason to seek contact with the foreigners.

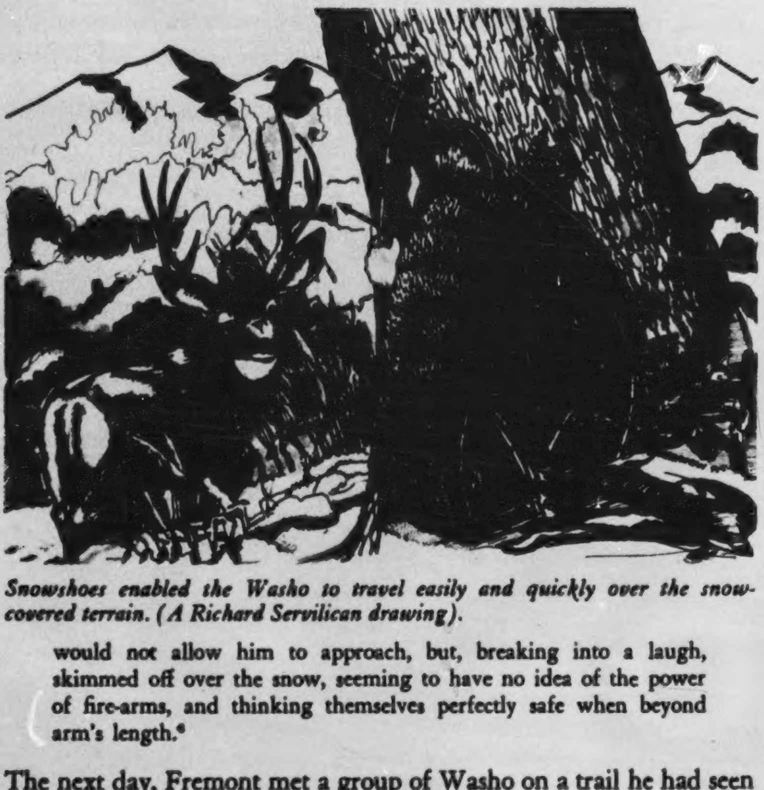
Although most white historians have concluded that the Spaniards never entered Washo territory, the Washo have told stories about them for many generations. Washo could have seen or met Spaniards during visits to the California lowlands and coast. Other Washo stories, however, speak of Spanish men in Washo land. One describes a group of Spaniards, dressed in funny clothes and hats, who captured Washo to work in a mine in Washo territory. Another refers to a mine the Spaniards worked in Brunswick Canyon. Some Washo words, including the names for horse, cow, and money, are similar to Spanish terms.[2] Stories told by the California Indians also suggest that the Spanish intruded in Washo land. These Indians told Spanish missionaries and explorers that a group of soldiers had come across the mountains and fought with them.[3] Perhaps these Spaniards came to Washo country from settlements in New Mexico, arriving from the southeast rather than the west. No records exist, however, of Spanish travel in Washo territory.

The first non-Indians recorded in Washo land were three American fur trappers led by Jedediah Smith in 1826. After Smith visited the area, other trappers and explorers passed near Washo territory. Often, these travellers did not record their contacts with the Washo. The Bartleson-Bidwell party, who crossed Washo land in 1841, did not describe the Washo, although they may have met them. This party, the first group of American settlers travelling to California, ascended from Walker River to Sonora Pass. They crossed the mountains and followed the Stanislaus River down the western slope.[4] The Washo watched them pass; three years later, a Washo group in the Sierras near Walker River described the party's route to John Charles Fremont. They showed Fremont the Bartleson-Bidwell party's camp, which was only a few miles below a Washo campsite in Antelope Valley.[5] Although the campsites were close together and the Washo may have met members of the Bartleson-Bidwell party, no documents recorded the event.

John Charles Fremont left the first written description of the Washo. In 1843 and 1844, Fremont led a government surveying expedition which passed through Washo land. Since Fremont kept detailed journals which recorded the party's activities, his notebooks preserve many descriptions of Washo life. He portrays a peaceful people who adapted to their environment .These people used snowshoes, caught rabbits with nets, and ate pine nuts and fish. They offered hospitality and friendship to Fremont and willingly shared their knowledge of their land with him.

The explorers, who had struggled through the deep snow in the area, noted the Washo's skill with snowshoes. On January 28, 1844, Fremont wrote:

> Snow and broken country together made our travelling difficult: we were often compelled to make large circuits, and ascend the highest and most exposed ridges, in order to avoid snow, which in other places was banked up to a great depth.
>
> During the day a few Indians were seen circling around us on snowshoes, and skimming along like birds; but we could not bring them within speaking distance. Godey, who was a little distance from the camp . . . heard a low whistle near, and, looking up saw two Indians half-hiding behind a rock about forty yards distant; they



Snowshoes enabled the Washo to travel easily and quickly over the snow-covered terrain. (A Richard Servilican drawing).

> would not allow him to approach, but, breaking into a laugh, skimmed off over the snow, seeming to have no idea of the power of fire-arms, and thinking themselves perfectly safe when beyond arm's length.[6]

The next day, Fremont met a group of Washo on a trail he had seen Indians use. Fremont and a small party followed the trail to the bottom of a hollow, where they met eight to ten Indians. Fremont described the meeting and the Washo's generosity: "They seemed to be watching our motions, and, like the others, at first were indisposed to let us approach, ranging themselves like birds on a fallen log on the hill-side above our heads, where, being out of reach, they thought themselves safe. Our friendly demeanor reconciled them, and, when we got near enough, they immediately stretched out to us handfulls of pine nuts, which seemed an exercise of hospitality."[7] In fact, this was the highest form of hospitality the Washo could offer to a visitor.[8] The strangers gave their hosts a few presents; then the Indians left to report to the other members of their group.

Meanwhile, Fremont's party established a camp, and Fremont noticed the pine nut trees which covered the lower areas of the surrounding mountains. The invaders finally persuaded several Washo, who were watching from the hills, to enter their camp. Soon, other Indians joined them. When Fremont met with the Washo, he asked about his exact location and possible routes to California:

> . . . others came in during the afternoon and in the evening we held a council. The Indians immediately made it clear that the water on which we were also belonged to the Great Basin . . . and it became evident that we had still the great ridge on the left to cross before we could reach the Pacific waters.
>
> We explained to the Indians that we were endeavoring to find a passage across the mountains . . . and told them that we wished them to bring us a guide, to whom we would give presents of scarlet cloth, and other articles, which were shown to them. They looked at the reward we offered, and conferred with each other, but pointed to the snow on the mountain, and drew their hands across their necks, and raised them above their heads, to show the depth; and signified that it was impossible for us to get through. They made signs that we must go to the southward, over a pass through a lower range, which they pointed out . . . once, they told us, about two years ago, a party of twelve men like ourselves had ascended the river, and crossed to the other waters [the Bartleson-Bidwell party]. They pointed out to us where they had crossed; but then, they said, it was summer time; but now it would be impossible.[9]

Earlier in the day, Fremont had noticed the pine nut trees; that evening the Washo brought a large supply of nuts to trade with the party. Fremont welcomed the food: "When roasted, their pleasant flavor made them an agreeable addition to our now scanty store of provisions, which were reduced to a very low ebb." The Indians told him that they caught fish when they could and lived on pine nuts when fish was not available. The nuts were important in their winter diet because they were usually available: "a portion being always at hand shut up in the natural storehouse of the cones. At present, they were presented to us as a whole people living upon this simple vegetable."[10] Pine nuts, however, were more than the "simple vegetable" Fremont described. The Washo used this valuable food source in many ways. The nuts made a delicious meal eaten alone or mixed with other foods like rabbit, deer, and seeds.

Two days later, Fremont saw Washo catching rabbits to bolster their food supply. The Indians, who carried bows and long nets, "appeared to have been out on the sage hills to hunt rabbits. These nets were perhaps 30 to 40 feet long, kept upright in the ground by slight sticks at intervals, and were made from a kind of wild hemp. . ."[11] Soon after the whites lit their fires, these Washo thronged into the camp. Fremont, who had asked all the Indians he met for a guide, told the Washo that he needed someone to conduct his party over the mountains. One older Washo introduced a young, intelligent-looking man who could guide them: "Here, said he, is a young man who has seen the whites with his own eyes." Fremont accepted the guide eagerly: "With a large present of goods, we prevailed upon this young man to be our guide, and he acquired among us the name Mélo—a word signifying friend, which they used very frequently." The next morning, Fremont's party prepared to travel on. They gave "Mélo" leggings, clothing, moccasins, and a large green blanket, which Fremont reports he appreciated.[12]

With this knowledgeable guide, Fremont's men headed into the mountains. As they climbed higher and higher in search of a passable route, they continued to meet Washo. On February 3, several Washo on snowshoes joined Fremont's party. Fremont described the snowshoes, which allowed the Washo to hunt and fish even when the snow was deep: "These were made of a circular hoop, about a foot in diameter, the interior space being filled with an open network of bark."[13] Ten days later, the white party saw a group of Washo near the top of the main ridge of the Sierras.[14] Although the snow was still very deep, the Indians were travelling to the western side of the mountain to fish. With their snowshoes, they could reach ice-fishing areas even in the middle of winter.

Soon after this meeting, Fremont left Washo territory. In his brief trip through Washo territory, he had met only *Hung a lel ti*. Their hospitality, however, represented the whole tribe. Fremont was the first white man to write about the Washo and describe their peaceful nature. Since other Indians had told the Washo how they had been mistreated by whites, the Washo were generally wary of the white men. Fremont was fortunate to see a number of Washo and be able to observe their way of life.

After Fremont's expeditions, other whites passed through Washo land on their way to California. Few of these travellers, however, mentioned the Washo in their accounts. Usually the Washo preferred to observe the strangers without being seen. Since the Indians generally remained concealed, few strangers had the opportunity to observe them as closely as Fremont had. Comments made by several strangers who visited Washo lands show how little the whites understood the Indian peoples. Often, these derogatory comments were outrageous lies. Sometimes they resulted from the fact that the whites made no distinction among Indian groups. Few whites tried to understand the difference between their culture and the Indian cultures. As a result, mistaken concepts often prejudiced Indian-white relationships. Later images of the Washo, based on these mistaken reports, perpetuated the false impressions.

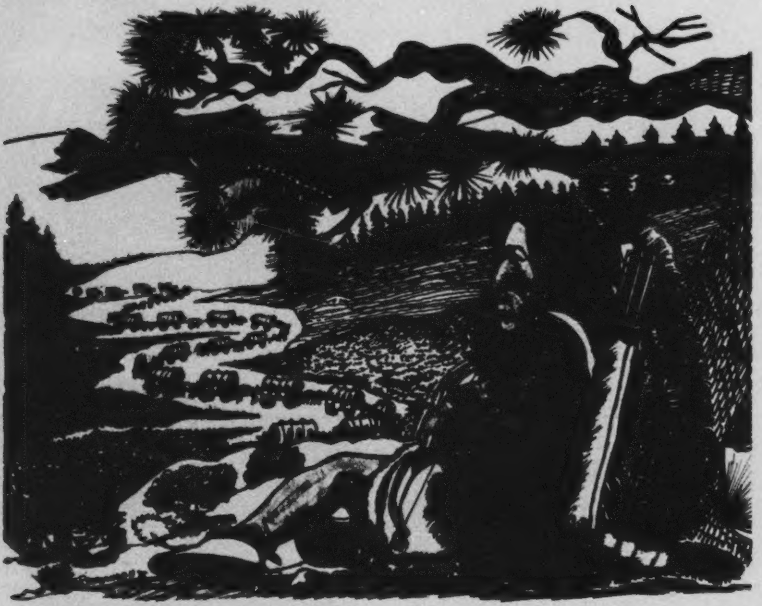
One group of trappers entered Washo land in the summer of 1844. In July they camped in Honey Lake Valley, on the northern edge of Washo territory. Although the Washo hunted and gathered food throughout the valley, they lived only in the southern part of it, along Long Valley Creek. The trappers did not distinguish between the Washo and the Pitt River and Paiute Indians who lived in other parts of the valley, so it is not certain that the party met Washo here. One of the trappers, Bill Hamilton, reported that "many Indians came to camp bringing furs, for which we traded," during the three months the party spent near Honey Lake.[15] Concerned that too many whites trespassed on their land, the Indians took traps, and possibly horses, from the whites' camp to discourage the intruders from entering Indian territory. The whites responded by whipping some Indians, and the visitors disappeared from their camp. A few days later, when the whites saw Indians approach the camp, they shot and killed five Indians. Not surprisingly, when the trappers searched the area, they found no more Indians. So the party decided to "set an example" by cremating the five they had killed. Hamilton commented that when the party left in October, the Indians who were watching them were "no doubt glad of our departure."[16]

From there, the party travelled to Pyramid Lake, where they met a "village of Pah Utes." Then they followed the Truckee River to Lake Tahoe, trapping as they went. Although it was late in the year, they found a small Washo group at the lake. Hamilton's account contained little information about the Indians, but it did describe the fish and game: ". . . they used flint for the points of arrows and spears . . . Game was readily approached and they were easily able to supply themselves with meat, while they were expert in catching fish." As winter approached, this group of trappers left Washo land to cross the Great Basin.[17]

In 1845 another white group crossed Washo land. This party, which headed east, saw Washo who lived along the Truckee River. While Hamilton had scarcely described the Indians he met, this group reported many details of Indian life. Unfortunately, most of their observations were inaccurate. They observed that the Indians on the Truckee River "live in floating houses, constructed of long, coarse grass, and on rafts of dry willow brush."[18] The "houses" they saw were probably fishing traps or platforms. Thus, even whites who saw the Washo rarely portrayed the Indians' way of life accurately or completely.

Although the intruders did not always see the Washo, the Indians watched the whites pass through their land. What they saw, particularly when the Donner party reached their land in 1846, made them mistrust these strangers. The Donner wagon train, one of the first to attempt to cross the Sierras through what is now called Donner Pass, reached the area late in the year. Before they crossed the pass, they were trapped by heavy snow. The *Wel mel ti* who lived in the Truckee area had watched this party enter their territory. They noticed the party because they had not seen wagons in the mountains before. At first, the *Wel mel ti* wondered whether the wagon train was a monster snake.[19] If the strange wagons were a shock, what the Washo saw later stunned them. Some members of the Donner Party, desperate from suffering and starvation, resorted to cannibalism. Washo who witnessed the grim ordeal told stories which have been preserved for generations. Some tales were grisly, while others revealed sympathy for the stranded whites. The Washo offered food to the party, but became frightened when they saw the whites eating their fellows. Early tales of the Spanish missions had discouraged the Washo from contacting the whites; reports of the cannibalism at Donner Lake convinced the Washo that whites were inhuman.

When the Donner Party struggled through Washo land, most Washo had not seen white men. As late as 1848, many had avoided the invaders. Soon, however, hundreds of wagons followed the Donner Party through Washo land. When gold was discovered in



At first, the wagon trains coming up the canyon looked like a monster snake. (A Richard Servilican drawing).

California in 1848 many whites rushed west to share in the wealth. Since all the major wagon trails crossed Washo land, and many routes had once been Indian trails, soon all the Washo had seen numerous whites. A large number of white men who travelled to California found no gold. Some returned to Washo land in Nevada to look for silver and gold. Others came back to squat on desirable Washo lands, steal the fertile valleys, and establish farms. This sudden influx of whites brought many changes to the Washo's lives.

Many accounts recall the Washo's first impressions of these whites, whom they called *da ba ah*. Because of the reports they had heard, the Washo considered the *da ba ah* dangerous men. They tried to avoid these strangers who killed one another for silver and gold. The Washo watched the *da ba ah,* whose dress, appearance, and life styles were so different from their own, with curiosity and caution. Often, the Washo did not understand the strange white culture. The white men's u-shaped footprints looked like the tracks of hooved animals. The Washo, who wore moccasins, wondered what sort of feet the *da ba ah* had.[20] Whites often described Indians as dreadful or miserable looking. To the Washo, the *da ba ah's* beards and strangely colored skins were equally repulsive and startling. One Washo woman in Carson Valley became sick when she first saw a white man.[21] Many things the whites brought with them appeared strange to the Washo. Often curiosity led the Washo to investigate the *da ba ah's* campsites after the covered wagons left. One Washo group found some black pepper in an abandoned white camp. Although they didn't know what the pepper was, it resembled one of their foods, the sand seed. When they tasted it, the whole group began sneezing and choking. Another man tasted soap and candles, thinking that they were bone marrow. One Washo who put on a pair of long johns was amused at the *da ba ah's* "buckskins." This man danced around, mocking the white man's flimsy garment. Another Washo party watched a wagon train travel through their country. To them, the train was an incredible sight. It looked like a big monster with exposed ribs. When men climbed out of the backs of the wagons, it seemed as if the monster had given birth to the white people.[22] Today, these first impressions may seem amusing, but at the time, the white man, his foreign culture, and his strange ways suddenly confronted the Washo. Drawing on their own experiences, the Washo tried to understand the peculiar ways these outsiders brought to their lands.

As mineral discoveries in California and Nevada brought more whites to the area, the Washo learned more about the intruders and their customs. Later, when the Washo recalled their first impressions of the *da ba ah,* they laughed at their naivete. By that time, however, the Washo could no longer choose to avoid the treacherous intruders. They could not ignore the white man, who had become a permanent, but unwelcome, part of their lives.

The Destruction of the Land

In the middle of the nineteenth century, groups of emigrants replaced the scattered fur traders and explorers who had first invaded the Washo territory. The *Hung a lel ti* had seen Fremont; as the *Pau wa lu* of Carson Valley and the *Wel mel ti* of Eagle Valley watched from the hills, white men on horses and in wagons poured through Washo territory. At first, most of these invaders passed through the area and continued on to the gold fields in California. Later, many returned to Washo valleys to steal the area's valuable resources and fertile land from the Washo.

The first whites who squatted in Washo territory had seen the many emigrants who passed through the area. By 1849, several whites decided to establish trading posts in the area. One early visitor in Eagle Valley saw the opportunities for trade in the fertile Washo land:

> This valley was crossed by one of the roads traveled by the early emigrants to California, and near its western border, about three miles from the river, appeared an eligible site for a ranch and trading-post. The locality was well watered, with fertile soil, having an elevation of 4,615 feet above the sea, and with a salubrious, healthy climate. The great travel, many thousands of emigrants with long trains of wagons and herds of cattle passing continually, affording a most favorable opportunity for trade, a fertile soil with natural grass, neighboring mountains clothed with luxuriant forest, and springs and mountain streams supplying abundant water of purest quality. . .[1]

Until 1850, no permanent trading posts had been set up in the area. Robert Lyon, who visited the area, described the arrangements: "There were several places on the Humboldt and Carson Rivers where whisky and flour were sold from a canvas tent or cloth house, but these traders packed their house on a mule and left when the emigration for that season was over."[2] In 1849 and 1850, Abner Blackburn and Hampton S. Beatie established Mormon Station near present-day Genoa. Robert Lyon remembered that the post was thriving when he visited it; later he wrote, "So you see the Mormon Station was well established and widely known in July, 1850, and the traders at the post were getting rich trading with the emigrants."[3]

The 1849–50 settlement was temporary; when John Reese arrived in the area in 1851, he established a permanent post at Mormon Station. Reese, who travelled from Salt Lake with a party of sixteen men, brought thirteen wagons filled with merchandise and supplies. Colonel Reese stated in 1884 that he arrived the first of June and settled in Genoa: "Not a single white man was there then. The nearest white man was a man in Gold Canyon who had a trading post there before and he wintered there in a kind of small dug out." Reese continued, "I know of no other white man that settled within 50 or 100 miles of there before him. There were a great many come afterwards from California and other ways."[4]

Mormon Station, the first permanent white settlement in Washo territory, flourished at the expense of the Washo, who lost the land and its resources. Stores, businesses, and homes sprung up in Washo lands. A saw mill, a corral, and a grist mill served the settlers. Soon, these settlers complained that the Washo were trespassing on "their" lands. Later, whites claimed that they had bought Genoa from the Indians for two sacks of flour. However, no record of the purchase or the treaty has been found.[5]

Men from the California goldfields established a second trading post in Eagle Valley in 1851. These men killed and stuffed an eagle, which gave the site its name. Eventually, Eagle Ranch developed into the town of Carson City.[6] Although whites came to Washo lands and built small posts throughout the 1850's, the largest number of settlers did not arrive until the next decade. In the 1850's, the settlers were largely traders who wanted to profit from the California-bound emigrants. Mormons from Salt Lake City also moved to the area to build up the population of the western part of Utah Territory, which included much of present-day Nevada. These intruders used the pine nut trees, grass seeds, game, and fish that the Washo depended upon. As more settlers arrived, more Washo resources were destroyed. Soon, the Washo found themselves beseiged by invaders.

Until 1848, Washo lands had been part of Mexican territory, and the United States government knew little about the area. Officials did not know the exact numbers and locations of the Washo and other Great Basin Indians. When the United States acquired New Mexico and California territories from Mexico through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the American government began to take some interest in the Great Basin tribes. Government interest in the Washo, however, never led to much more than sporadic reports on their condition.

The first of these reports began in the early 1850's. In 1851, Indian Agent Jacob Holeman stated that "the Indians having been driven from their lands, and their hunting ground destroyed without compensation therefor—they are in many instances reduced to a state of suffering bordering on starvation." [7] Holeman, who visited western Utah Territory, wrote that several tribes or bands of Indians known as the "Washaws" lived in the mountains and valleys near the Carson River.[8] A California agent described the resources of the area: "The Valleys and lowlands produce berries, grass seed, and roots of various kinds. Carson Lake—Truckee lake—the rivers which bear the same name and their tributaries, furnish immense quantities of fish. . . ." [9] Holeman recommended that the government sign a treaty with the Indians in the Territory. He reminded officials that "if something is not done . . . in the course of a few years, the Indians will be compelled to give up their present locations to an emigrating population and be driven forth to perish on the plains." [10] Meanwhile, whites continued to settle in the area. In 1856 an influx of Mormon farmers reached the Mormon Station area, which had been renamed "Genoa" by Orson Hyde.[11] Although the Mormons returned to Salt Lake City the following year, white settlers continued to farm and exploit Washo lands.

In 1856, Garland Hurt told Brigham Young that "there is another small tribe called the Was-saws, who live mostly on the Sierra Nevada mountains, but claim the Carson as their land, and have made several attempts to collect rent off the settlers. . . ." [12] Because so many whites had come to the area, the Washo had difficulty finding and gathering their native foods. Whites had depleted the game, fish, and plants the Indians had depended on.

One early history recorded a series of battles between the Washo and white farmers near Milford, California, which began in October 1857. The conflict, which became known as the "Potato War," reportedly started when one hundred Washo "harvested" three acres of potatoes which belonged to a white farmer. The whites attacked a nearby Washo camp, killing three Washo and wounding one. A few days later, the farmers attacked the Washo again, recovering some of the potatoes. The final battle occurred some distance from the first two, since the Washo had split into three groups and moved to different campsites. In this foray, the white forces killed seven more Washo and wounded fourteen. According to white accounts, the "war" ended when the Washo withdrew from the valley.[13]

The Washo, however, have no memory of this "war." They did not gather food in large groups, like the hundred people described in the account, and they never gathered potatoes in the large quantities the account refers to. Mrs. Barrington, a Washo woman, recalled a time when her grandparents gathered wild potatoes. They came upon a patch of cultivated potatoes, which looked like an abundant field of wild ones. As they started to gather these, the people had only a few potatoes in their baskets. Suddenly white soldiers surrounded them and began to shoot. The Washo could not understand why the whites were shooting at them. Finally, one white man told the others not to kill any one else, but the whites took one Washo captive to Honey Lake.[14]

In the following decades, the Washo's problems increased. In 1859, silver and gold were discovered near Virginia City. Miners from California rushed back across the mountains to the Comstock Lode, which was located in the heart of Washo territory. The "rush to Washoe" brought miners, traders, and settlers to Washo land. As early as January 1859, many settlers had arrived. As the *Territorial Enterprise* noted: "The influx of actual settlers has of late been very considerable, at the close of the year there was a population of about 200 at Genoa and about 200 at Gold Canyon." [15] At the peak of the rush, approximately twenty thousand people came to Virginia City.[16] As miners poured into the area, farmers, ranchers, and settlers continued to spread throughout Washo land, forcing the Washo from their ancestral homes. While the settlers moved more slowly than the miners, they too took Washo land and wasted Washo resources.

All the settlers used the pine nut trees which were abundant around Virginia City and Carson City. They cut down the trees, which had provided a large part of the Washo's food supply. They used the timber to build homes and stores, to shore up the mines, and to provide fuel. One early history described the rapid destruction of the trees: "The Pine Nut Mountains of the eastern portion of the county [Ormsby County] were so named from being clothed with that species of tree, but the demands of the miner and the quartz mills long since demanded their denudation, leaving them bleak and barren."[17] The gangs of men who cut the trees also trampled plants, destroyed seeds, and drove away the game the Washo had depended on.

In 1858, the Carson Valley Agency had been founded in Washo territory. Frederick Dodge, the first agent, visited the Washo in 1859. His report estimated the Washo population:

> The Wa-sho nation numbers about 900 souls, and inhabit [sic] the country along the base of the Sierra Nevada mountains, from Honey lake on the north to the west fork of Walker's river on the south. They are divided into three different bands. Captain Jim's band is located in the vicinity of Carson, Wa-sho, and Eagle Valleys, and Lake Bigler [Lake Tahoe]. This band numbers 145 men, 110 women, and 87 children; total, 342. . . . Pou-Souke's band is located in Little valley, between the east and west forks of Carson River, and numbers about the same as Captain Jim's band, 340. Deer Dick's band lives in and claims Long valley southeast from Honey lake, and numbers about the same as the others, 300.[18]

Dodge suggested removing the Washo from these lands to two reservations, one in the Truckee Valley at Pyramid Lake and another on Walker River at Walker Lake. He believed that moving the Washo to these reservations would improve their lives. It would also have removed them from the heavily travelled east-west trails and reduced their contact with whites, since the proposed reservation areas had not yet been settled.[19] Dodge intended that the Washo and the Northern Paiutes share these areas. His plan failed because it was impractical, if not impossible. The two tribes spoke different languages and had different customs. As Governor Nye commented in 1861: "The Washo have no reservation, or rather none on which they can reside. I understand that the Pyramid Lake reservation was set off and intended for both the Pah-Utes and the Washoes. That idea is entirely impracticable. They are not friendly and cannot live together, and it would result in trouble and incessant broil."[20] The

Washo did not want to leave their ancestral lands to share a reservation with another tribe. They intended to remain in the territory where the Creator had made them. Since they had always lived in the area, which belonged to them by right, they opposed all attempts to relocate them.

The whites' presence also provoked conflicts between the Washo and their Indian neighbors. In February, 1859, Colonel Warren Wasson reported that the "Pah-utes" claimed *Wel mel ti* land in Long Valley. Deer Dick, a Washo leader, visited Wasson to demand that whites pay the rightful owners of the land, the *Wel mel ti*. To avoid conflict, Wasson made a new bargain with the Washo so that whites could take the land.[21]

Conflicts between the Paiutes and the whites often had serious repercussions for the Washo. Hostility between the Paiutes and the white invaders led to the Pyramid Lake War of 1860. Because whites had been defeated in the first battle of that war, white soldiers looking for revenge often killed any Indians they came in contact with. Whites often mistook the Washo for Paiutes. Sometimes the whites, blinded by hate, tried to punish any Indian for the conflict caused by a particular group. In one tragic incident, white soldiers murdered a number of Washo. Near Slide Mountain, site of an ancient landslide, soldiers attacked a large group of Washo women who were gathering food. One woman, who survived the attack by hiding in the brush with her child, later told what had happened: "The women were out cutting willows while the men folk were fishing when someone said there were lots of horses coming their way and before they knew it, these men on horses opened fire on us, killing everyone." [22]

Agents' reports from this time confirm the seriousness of the Washo's problems; the reports, however, did little to alleviate the hardship caused by the intruders. One 1860 report recommended a separate reservation for the Washo, "more distant from the Pah-Utes and under charge of a separate Indian agent." [23] In a letter dated November 3, 1861, John Reese wrote that the Washo in Genoa demanded that the Indian Agent stop intrusions on their lands and make whites pay for land they occupied.[24] Although Dodge had assured the Washo that whites would not take their lands, graze stock on their land, or mine their gold, these activities continued. In

December 1861 the Washo demanded a treaty to end these conditions.[25] Several observers described the depletion of Washo resources at this time. One wrote:

> The grass seeds which served to bridge over from one pinenut crop to another were destroyed by the whitemen's cattle and they [the Washo] were reduced practically to starvation. The winter of 1860–61 was unusually severe and many perished from starvation. One can imagine how they felt when gangs of men and teams were turned loose on the pinenut mountains sweeping the hills bare of their orchards, as they called them, cutting the trees up into mining timber, cord wood and even reducing the refuse to charcoal. They were forced to look on in silence.[26]

Governor Nye, who visited the Indians in his territory, reported that:

> They [the Washo] have learned that the great chief or captain at Washington, through the lesser captain here, must feed them, or help to do so at least. There is great justice in this request. The streams in which they formerly fished are now all spoiled for that purpose by the operation of the miners and the washing of the ores and metals. They are indeed most all diverted from their original courses, or dammed so frequently that the fish have disappeared from them. Lake Bigler [Lake Tahoe], lying in the country of the Washoes, and from which they formerly obtained large quantities of the best kind of fish, is now taken possession of by the whites, and has become a watering place, to which large numbers from the Territory and California resort, and from which this poor tribe are virtually excluded. The hills and plains over which roamed plenty of game are now occupied by the whites, and the game has fled like the Indians from their presence.[27]

Agents in the following years echoed these statements. Sometimes they recommended plans to help the Washo, but the government took little action. Meanwhile, settlers continued to deplete the land, the game, the fish, and the plants.

In 1864, Indian Agent Jacob Lockhart reported that: "The Washoe tribe of Indians inhabit the immediate Eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. These Indians have no Reservations and their country for the most part is settled up by the whites. . . ." [28] Because whites crowded Washo lands, many Washo also lived in and around the white towns. Since they could no longer gather food or live as they had, they were forced to take menial jobs at white homes and ranches. In 1865, Agent Lockhart protested the Washo's condition. Noting that the Washo had been peaceful, he continued: "The country they formerly occupied in peace and plenty has now become almost entirely settled up so much so that they can scarcely find any more an undisturbed 'camping ground' even. . . . [sic] There are yet remaining of this tribe of Indians about Eight Hundred (800) souls that have no place that they can call their own to lie down upon." Lockhart recommended that: "Three Hundred and Sixty (360) acres of land in the Carson Valley and Three Hundred and Sixty (360) acres in Washoe Valley situated along the base of the Sierra Nevada Mountains be set aside for the use and benefit of these deserving Indians."[29] Lockhart's proposal was mentioned in some correspondence in 1865. Finally, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, H. G. Parker, dismissed the project in a letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. He claimed that there was no land available and concluded that "the proposition is, at present, inadvisable and inexpedient."[30] Thus, no action was taken on Lockhart's recommendations.

In 1866, Indian Agent Frank Campbell reported to Superintendent Parker that "there is no reservation within their district except the timber reserve, which is not adapted to cultivation, nor arable land which is not occupied."[31] Parker, in his report of the same year, once again described the Washo as "savages." He concluded his report by stating that the Government would not need to provide reservation land for the Washo, since the tribe was nearly extinct:

> The spring, summer and autumn months are spent in fishing about Washoe and Tahoe lakes and the streams which flow through their country. They also gather grass-seed and pine-nuts, hunt rabbits, hares, and ducks.
>
> There is no suitable place for a reservation in the bounds of their territory, and, in view of their rapidly diminishing numbers and the diseases to which they are subjected, none is required.[32]

The government neither protected the Washo nor restrained the whites. The reports of the Indian Agents and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs show how little the government did for the Washo, who suffered from "prolonged mistreatment by the U.S. and those acting under the authority and protection of the United States." Despite the rapid changes white settlement brought to the Washo and their ancestral lands, the government spent little to help the Indians. "The meager gratuities of $52.00 in 1865 and $343.55 in 1867, being the only gratuities shown for the entire period from 1853 to 1913 . . . are strikingly indicative of the Government's callous disregard for the Washoe throughout this period."[33] Meanwhile, construction in Washo lands went on. Heavily travelled toll roads were built and maintained. In 1866, the transcontinental railroad reached Washo territory.[34] The railroad brought a large influx of construction workers and settlers. Increased commerce made greater demands on the area's resources.

The government seems to have done little to help the Washo. In 1870, Superintendent Douglas reported to the Commissioner:

> This tribe numbers but little, if any, over 500 of all ages and sexes. They frequent the settled portions of the State, principally the towns of Virginia City, Carson City, Reno, Washoe City, and Genoa. In the summer time they betake themselves to the mountains in the vicinity of Lake Tahoe and Hope Valley, to fish and hunt. In the winter they congregate in small bands near the towns, subsisting mainly by working for the whites and by the sale of ducks, geese, rabbits, and fish, for which they find a ready market. They need but little care as far as subsistence and clothing is concerned. Medicines for the sick have been the only supplies issued to them.[35]

In 1872, the Commissioner stated that the Washo had "no reservation and no treaty, are not in charge of any agent of the Government. . . ."[36] Some agents asked the government to help the Washo. In 1871, Lieutenant Lee recommended that the government establish a reservation for them.[37] Six years later, another agent repeated the plea. A. J. Barnes, in his 1877 report to the Commissioner, recommended government assistance: "They are living in and around Reno and Carson City, this State. . . . They say now they will work and try every way in their power to support themselves in an honest way if they can get a little assistance from the Government to make a beginning. I trust something will be done for this once honored and respected tribe, whose condition is now deplorable in the extreme. . . ."[38]

At this time, the Washo's lives combined traditional customs and new styles. They had adopted the white man's dress, modifying it to suit their tastes. The women wore long dresses, aprons, shawls,

This Washo family, photographed at Lake Tahoe at the turn of the century, wears the white man's clothing many Washo adopted at the time.

and head scarves; the men dressed in brightly colored shirts and levis. Although they often lived near towns and ranches where they found work, the Washo still gathered, as they had in the old days, to gamble and speak their native language. They still observed ancient ceremonies, like the girl's dance, the pine nut dance, and the rabbit dance, in places where they would not be disturbed.

By this time, whites had depleted much of their land and resources. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the Washo protested frequently to local officials. Again and again, they asked the government to help them stop the desecration of their lands. On April 11, 1880, Captain Jim, Captain Pete, and Captain Walker led a meeting at Carson Valley. This meeting was called to deal with damage done to the pine nut trees near Double Springs Flat. So many trees had been destroyed that a valuable Washo food source was threatened. Whites had also depleted the fish in Lake Tahoe. The Washo who met to discuss these problems agreed to appeal to the governor of Nevada. They prepared a petition, asking him to stop the destruction of Washo property and help the people secure their rights. The petition explained that the Washo had depended on game, fish, and pine nuts before whites settled in the area. When the land in the valley was surveyed and sold to whites, the Washo lost not only their homes, but their means of subsistence as well. This made the Washo "dependent on the Charity of the whites for sustenance. Therefore we demand that the Government stop further destruction of property belonging to the Washoe Indians. Our title . . . never having been extinguished by treaty or otherwise. Or in default thereof, that the Government of the United States make to us a suitable compensation for the same."[39]

The next month, another petition, sent to Carl Schurz, Secretary of the Interior, explained the Washo's problems. Not only had Washo lands and resources been taken; the Washo had received little government help: "Your petitioners would further represent: that the Washoe Tribe have always been reasonable and quiet, never molesting the white people except by applications for food since their subsistence is destroyed, and that as a tribe they have never received any assistance from the government except some small distributions some fifteen years ago, when Hon. Jas. W. Nye was Governor of Nevada Territory; the whole, not equaling one dollar for each member of the tribe." The petition, signed by ninety-three Douglas County residents, asked that the government take charge of the Washo and "make provision for their general welfare." The Office of Indian Affairs received the petition May 5, 1880.[40]

Washo also asked local officials for help. During this time, Captain Jim spoke with the governor frequently, explaining the tribe's grievances.[41] The Washo asked the governor to stop whites who were cutting timber on Washo lands. The abuses continued, however. Ancient tribal lands, formerly abundant game, and the sacred pine nut trees were vanishing. Commercial fishermen, established at Lake Tahoe, even chased some Washo away from the lake. When white fishermen tried to prevent the Washo from fishing near the lake, the Washo threatened to retaliate.[42]

In 1891 the Washo prepared another petition. They planned to take this statement to Washington to explain to the country's leaders that their lives were threatened. Captain Jim, Captain Joe, Washoe Johnny (Peace-maker), Pete Duncan, and Si-sa Minkey worked on the petition. They also enlisted a distinguished lawyer,

Fish have always been important to the Washo. Commercial fishing, however, nearly depleted the fish at Lake Tahoe. In the early 1900's, the Washo worked as boatmen, fishermen, and guides. Some, like Maggie and Billy Merrill, caught fish to sell to the hotels near the lake.

Jim Torison of Carson City, to help draft the statement.[43] To raise money to take the petition to Washington, the Washo collected money from the white residents of Carson and Eagle Valleys. Contributors signed a subscription list, stating: "We subscribe these amounts in order that a committee of said Indians may go to Washington and present this matter to the Great Father, believing that this tribe of Indians should and will receive recognition."[44] On March 27, 1892, the *Territorial Enterprise* reported on the project: "They say only one man in Carson Valley refused to contribute. The sums given range from fifty cents to two dollars, but a dollar ante seems to be the general rule. Wednesday the fund amounted to $50. The Washoe Indians deserve aid from the general Government."[45] In all, $180 was raised. Since funds were limited, only two Washo could make the trip. Captain Jim and Dick Bender, who spoke English well, were chosen.[46]

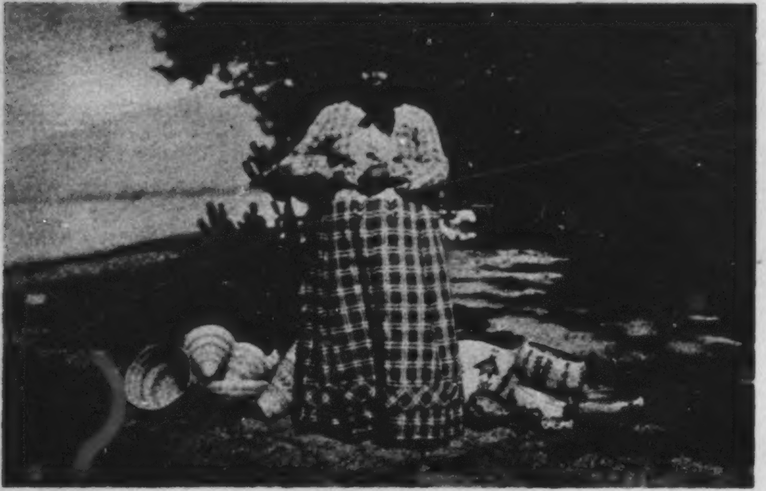
Captain Jim, who was born in the Pine Nuts Hills near Double Springs Flat, emerged as an important Washo leader in the 1880's. He was the second "Captain Jim"; an earlier leader in the southern

Captain Jim, an early spokesman for the Washo, protested when whites depleted the fish at Lake Tahoe and destroyed the pine nuts. (Courtesy of the Nevada Historical Society).

part of Washo territory in the 1850's was also known as "Captain Jim." The second Captain Jim, known among the Washo as Gumalanga or Epesuwa, presided over gatherings at pine nut ceremonies. He resolved many disputes among the Washo, between the Washo and the Paiutes, and with the whites. Again and again, he protested to government officials when whites threatened Washo lands and resources. Captain Jim, who died in 1911, was a respected leader and spokesman, known for his generosity and modesty.[47]

On April 15, he and Dick Bender left for Washington, with "letters to the President and Congressman Bartine, and also a petition signed by 33 pupils of the Indian School praying that the Great Father (President Harrison) will consider the matter well." [48] The two men, who had railroad passes and letters of recommendation, stayed in the capitol for thirteen days. While they were there, they met with the senators of Nevada and California and appeared before the Indian Commission. Little is recorded about their stay in Washington, but Captain Jim is said to have spoken with the president. Referring to the leader as "my brother," Captain Jim held out a handful of pine nut flour and explained the Washo's problems: "This food from the pine nut trees is what my people eat . . . it is the same as our mother's milk when it is made into soup . . . your people are destroying our trees and our food . . . we ask you to help us so we can live." [49] When the two men left Washington, they believed that the government would help them.

When they returned to their homes, however, they found that the government could not understand the Washo's concern for their land. The government offered them land in the Humboldt Valley which belonged to the Paiutes. The Washo did not want the Paiutes' land; they had asked for help in their own homeland.[50] However, they received no protection for their pine nut trees. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs promised to ask the Secretary of the Interior "to allow him to use one thousand dollars ($1,000) of the emergency fund, for their immediate relief—for the assistance of the old, feeble and infirm—the money will be sent to Mr. Gibson, Superintendent of the Indian School. . . ." [51] In December of the same year, Captain Jim wrote to the Secretary of the Interior to ask about his money: "Send Greeting to my Big Father at Washington City D.C. And want him to send me a paper and tell me what was done with the $1,000.00 Dollars sent to Carson City for the Washo Indians last summer. The Agent Mr. Gibson said he spent it all for clothing and flour and gave it to the Indians—My people say they no get much. Please tell me what is going to be done for my people (Washo Indians) this winter—we have some very old men and women who are unable to



In this photograph, taken near Lake Tahoe at the turn of the century, Jenny Shaw of Woodfords, California, shows some of her baskets. (Courtesy of Connie Hunter).

do any thing and are very cold and hungry all the time."[52] Instead of protection for their lands and resources, the Washo were offered charity. Apparently, they did not even receive that.

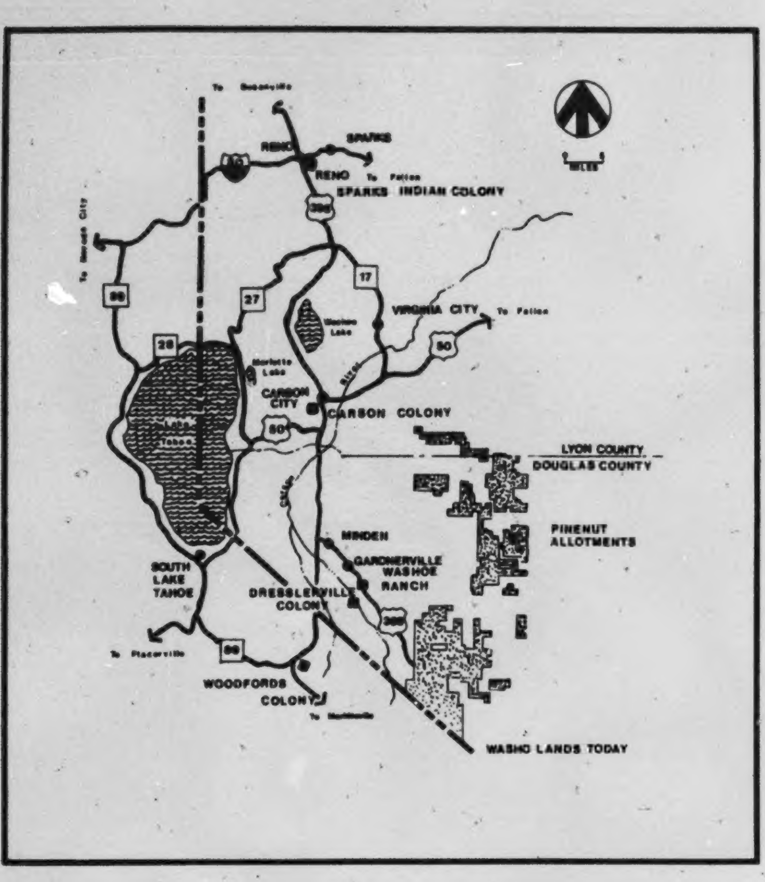
Within a fifty year period, a way of life the Washo had preserved for centuries disappeared. Abundant timber, fish, and game had been destroyed. White intruders first stole and then claimed Washo lands. They even forced the Washo from their ancient homes. The Washo, who remained peaceful in spite of these injustices, frequently asked government officials to help them. The government, however, gave the Washo little. The Washo signed no treaties and received no reservations. They struggled to preserve their lives without any significant assistance.

The Pine Nut Lands

The government had done nothing to preserve the Washo tribe's homeland from the hordes of white people who entered the area. Under the provisions of the General Allotment Act of February 8, 1887, however, individual Washo began to receive land. This act allowed tribal members to claim 160 acres of public domain land. In many ways, the history of Washo allotments repeated the problems and injustices of the settlement period.

The Washo did not receive all the lands they claimed; much of the land allotted to them was practically worthless. They had asked for the pine nut hills and the area around Lake Tahoe which had been part of their ancestral homeland. Although some writers have stated that the Indians wanted only the pine nut hills, the Washo actually claimed the Tahoe area as well. Because white people had already stolen and claimed this land for themselves, the authorities discounted the Washo's rights to this area. They offered the Washo a simple choice: accept the pine nut allotments or take nothing at all. Although none of the sites were suitable for homes and few had water rights, the Washo took them because they contained the sacred pine nuts trees which provided food. When the lands were allotted, whites had taken the fertile areas with springs and other water sources, leaving the Washo land that was largely barren, rocky, and arid. Some allotments contained only 120 acres, since whites already owned the adjacent land and the water rights.[1]

In 1893 the government appointed a special allotting agent to assign land to the Washo. The agent, Michael Piggot,[2] did not hold a general meeting to allot the land; instead he established an office and divided the land when Washo groups visited his office. First, the agent asked the applicant where the old people of his group gathered pine nuts. Using maps of the pine nut ranges, the agent tried to identify these picking grounds. The maps included landmarks the Washo could identify: "These Indians knew the landmarks, such as prominent mountain peaks, canyons, small streams and springs." Then the agent asked for the individual's name; if


To Susanville
RENO
SPARKS
80
RENO
To Fallon
SPARKS INDIAN COLONY
395
To Nevada City
89
27
17
Washoe Lake
VIRGINIA CITY
To Fallon
50
28
Marlette Lake
River
CARSON CITY
CARSON COLONY
Lake Tahoe
50
LYON COUNTY
DOUGLAS COUNTY
PINENUT ALLOTMENTS
MINDEN
GARDNERVILLE
WASHOE RANCH
SOUTH LAKE TAHOE
DRESSLERVILLE COLONY
395
To Placerville
89
WOODFORDS COLONY
To Markleeville
WASHO LANDS TODAY
MILES

he had no English name, the agent gave him one. Finally, the agent turned to the map and pointed out a section of land. The agent did not inspect the allotments: "He [Dick Bender] states that he knew of no surveying parties going out into the mountains to locate these allotments and it is very evident that they were made almost entirely if not altogether in the office."[3] The agent felt that these methods were justified because the Washo could identify the geographical areas on the map. At the time, however, many plots did not have mature trees and others had no timber at all: "Many of these allotments, in fact a very large body of them, were at that time almost totally denuded of mature timber."[4] Many pine nut trees in the Washo pine nut lands had been cut down and used for timber and fuel in the mines at Virginia City.[5]

Allotments were made to the Washo between 1893 and 1910. Most of the plots were in the Carson Valley area. Washo in California received allotments near Woodfords and Loyalton.[6] In a letter to Captain Pete, Calvin Asbury, Superintendent of Carson Indian School, described the allotments as "scattered for a long distance about Mountain House to Empire."[7] The government held these lands in trust, giving the allottees patents which their descendants would inherit.

The allotments did not solve the Washo's problems, however. They did not provide homesites or agricultural land. In addition, whites frequently disregarded allotment boundaries. In 1895, Captain Pete Mayo from Alpine and Mono Counties (near Woodfords, California) reported that the people's rights were still threatened by whites who gained control over Washo timber. At Pete Mayo's request, the Special Indian Agent of the Digger Indian Agency at Jackson wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. He summarized the Washo's complaints and asked for government help. Not only were whites trespassing on Washo land; the allotments had not been completed:

> The chief seemed more concerned about getting homes on the public lands than for any assistance otherwise — He tells me that a year and a half ago, or so, an agent of the Government visited them and commenced to make allotments of land, but left before finishing the work. He promised them to return soon and they have since waited in vain. It has been a source of great disappointment to them —

> They also complain that the longer this duty is delayed the the [sic] less chance there will be to secure homes, as the lands suitable for them are being purchased by . . . ["synvicates"?; manuscript unclear] that are fast getting control of our timber country. The lands in Alpine and some parts of Mono are of that class — They have depended upon it for their livelihood as it furnished game, nuts and other things palatable to this race.
>
> . . . .
>
> Unlike the Diggers who are fast disappearing, the Washoes are a healthy race intelligent and progressive. They seem to be able to take care of themselves, and those dependent upon them — provided their opportunities are not curtailed and their lands taken from them.[8]

In the same year, Captain Jim reported trespassers on his allotment. The Governor of Nevada issued a statement prohibiting trespass on Captain Jim's lands, which concluded: "Such rights should be respected by all good citizens, not only because the timber on said lands is reserved for the purpose of gathering 'Pine-Nuts' therefrom for support of himself and his family, but chiefly because, they are his rights."[9]

This warning had little effect. Two years later, several authorities noted trespasses on Washo lands. S. Summerfield, the United States Attorney for Nevada, issued another statement:

> I am informed by the bearer, Captain Jim, that certain parties are cutting and removing wood and timber from the public domain in the Pine Nut Mountains in Douglas County, Nev. contrary to the laws of the United States and to the especial damage of the Washo Indians who are accustomed to get their winter food of Pine Nuts there. All such persons are warned to desist from any violation of the laws of the United States with respect to cutting or removing wood from the public domain or prosecution will follow.[10]

Washo in California complained that "tribal rights and privileges in hunting and fishing" had been denied them.[11] Eugene Mead, Superintendent of the Carson Indian School, reported trespassers in a letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs:

> Long since, all the good land of Carson Valley, where these Indians live, has been taken up by white men, and this arid mountainous district was allotted to the Indians. Barren as it is, it grows a species of pine that produces a very nutritious kind of nut that is these

> Indians' main subsistence. The timber, also, of this pine is the best fuel in this market, — the wood brings $7.50 per cord — but as the land has not been surveyed the Indians can not tell exactly the location of their respective allotments, and, therefore, have no legal recourse to stop wood cutters from thus trespassing on their rights. This district has been for a great many years and is now the main support of these Indians, but unless this illegal practice is soon stopped, the Indians will not have this meager means of support.[12]

In 1898, Captain Jim complained to the authorities that whites were still trespassing on Washo land.[13] The following year, the Land Office in Carson City issued another statement which prohibited timber cutting on Washo lands near Double Springs: "Surveyed or unsurveyed, guilty of trespass and are liable to punishment by fine or imprisonment or both." [14] Residents of Douglas County also asked that the Washo be allowed to fish in the streams near Lake Tahoe, stating that "as the U.S. Government has never done anything for the Washoe tribe of Indians it is an Injustice to prohibit them from catching fish where they have been accustomed to from time immemorial." [15] The injustices continued; the allotments had not solved the problems the Washo faced.

The difficulties, however, reflect only part of the Washo's lives during this time. The Washo, who often lived near towns where they could find work, tried to adjust to the new life around them. Many Washo lived in the Lone Mountain area near Carson City. They camped outside the town and often gathered under the cottonwood trees near the V & T Railroad Depot. They could ride the V & T's open boxcar to Reno, Virginia City, and Minden. When they boarded a train to travel to a celebration, the women wore colorful silk scarves they had purchased from Chinese merchants, and the men dressed in brightly colored shirts.[16]

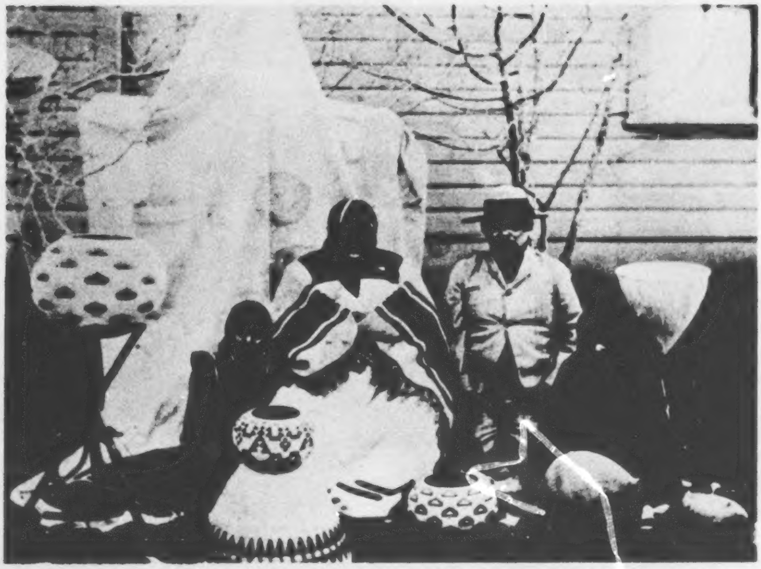
At this time, some Washo children attended the Carson Indian School, which had opened in 1890. The school, built as a result of legislation introduced by Senator William Stewart of Nevada, occupied 240 acres south of Carson City. One building served as a dormitory, kitchen, dining room, laundry, and school-room; later, more buildings were added. In the first year, thirty-seven Washo, Paiute, and Shoshone pupils enrolled. Many of these students were forced to attend the school. By 1901, when the first class graduated, the school taught European culture to children from the first through the tenth grade. The children spent half the day in the classroom, learning the English language and mathematics. During the rest of the day, students worked or received vocational training. In the early years, "vocational training" often involved nothing more than doing the work that needed to be done at the school. The girls washed dishes, put sheets through a mangle, sewed, cooked, ironed, and scrubbed floors. The boys milked cows, patched shoes, cut lawns, and worked in the fields, gardens, bakery and smithy.[17]

Government boarding schools, which were under the control of the War Department, were organized according to military principles. The pupils wore uniforms, belonged to platoons and companies, and were commanded by a student officer appointed by the principal or superintendent. Indian children who had been taken from their homes often found it difficult to adjust to the military atmosphere at the school. One former pupil, Frank Rivers, remembered his experiences at the Carson Indian School. When the officials arrived at his people's camp to take the children to the school, "he was only seven years old then and neither he nor the other children, nor the parents could understand what was happening, for none of them spoke any English." As he recalled, "They just came right into our camp and rounded up us kids and took us to school." When he arrived there, he found that "the school was run strictly military. They put us into blue serge uniforms, and every day we had to march and drill. Many boys tried to run away, but they were always caught and brought back." [18]

Parents, as well as children, disliked the school. They objected to it because it took their children away from their families and their familiar environments. Children were punished for speaking their native languages, and many of them lost touch with their own culture and families. But the parents' most serious objection was that, often, children taken to the school never came home. Many of them caught strange diseases, like smallpox, cholera, and influenza, brought by the white man. The parents did not want to send their children away, or have them taken away, to die.[19]

In later years, the school improved. Boys learned real vocational skills, like plumbing, carpentry, mechanics, and electrical work. Girls were trained in home economics and nursing. Graduates went on to the Sherman Institute, Haskell Institute, and the Carlisle Indian School. Many graduates of the Carson Indian School, including Richard Barrington, John Dressler, and John Keliiaa, became prominent citizens and used the skills they learned to help others.

During the late nineteenth century, another prominent Washo was active. Dat-So-La-Lee, a reknowned Washo basket weaver, was born about 1835 and spent her early childhood near Woodfords, California. She may have met Fremont when he passed through Carson Valley in 1844.[20] Weaving baskets required much time and patience. Dat-So-La-Lee gathered and prepared all her own materials. In the spring, she collected bracken roots to make black thread. In the summer, she gathered redbud to obtain red thread. In the fall, she gathered long straight willow boughs to use for the main part of the baskets. In 1871, she met Abram Cohn, who later became her manager. Cohn made her promise that she would not make baskets for



Dat-so-la-lee, a reknowned basketmaker, wove many famous baskets. Here she displays some of her baskets, with her husband, Charley Kizer, and some unidentified children. (Courtesy of the Nevada Historical Society).

anyone but him. Since the Washo regard promises as sacred, Dat-So-La-Lee kept her word and no members of the Washo tribe possess any of her baskets. In 1888, she married Charley Kizer, taking the name Louisa Kizer; many of her baskets are known as "Louisa Kizer Baskets." Cohn brought her to Lake Tahoe at the turn of the century and later, in 1919, took her to the St. Louis Exposition. Although such trips made her work famous, Dat-So-La-Lee did not enjoy demonstrating her technique to large audiences, since according to Washo custom basketmakers only teach the members of their families.[21] In the 1890's, many of her baskets sold for fifty dollars apiece; today those baskets are valued at ten thousands dollars. Thirty-five of Dat-So-La-Lee's masterpieces and seventy-five minor works are known today. Her most famous ceremonial basket, which took two years to complete, contains 84,500 tightly woven stitches. Today, her baskets can be seen in the Nevada State Historical Society Museum in Reno, the Nevada State Museum in Carson City, and the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh.[22] Like many Washo women, Dat-So-La-Lee, the most famous Washo basketmaker, preserved a traditional craft in spite of the changes white men forced on the Washo.

Problems with the Washo allotments continued in the early twentieth century. In the 1903 *Annual Report,* the agent explained that the allotments were not satisfactory because they "cover for the most part arid sagebrush and rough mountain lands, upon which it is out of the question for the Indians to reside and build homes." [23] The Superintendent of Carson Indian School, James K. Allen, and the Special Allotting Agent, W. E. Casson, conducted the survey of the pine nut allotments. In their report, they concluded that "all the allotments are situated on rocky, mountainous ranges, and at least fifty per cent of the same are barren of even small pine nut trees. . . ." They added that "it is now and always will be impossible to secure water for irrigating these lands, or to even secure enough for domestic purposes. . ." and concluded that the allotted land should be exchanged for agricultural land with water rights. They suggested that small tracts of land in Carson Valley be purchased for individuals, or that a section of land be provided for the whole tribe.[24]

In the following years, many agents suggested that the allotments be cancelled and proposed other plans for the Washo. Meanwhile, trespassers continued to invade Washo lands. Lumber companies bought valuable Washo timber for practically nothing. Often whites forced the Washo to give up valuable land and resources. Whites cut pine nut trees on Washo land without asking permission. Some even chased the Washo from their own lands and prevented them from gathering their pine nuts.

In 1910, the Superintendent of Carson School reported on the Washo living near Gardnerville and working at the ranches in the area. He had no plan to help them:

> As to what could be afforded them, I am somewhat at a loss what to recommend. It was suggested by someone in the Office . . . that we could give them ten acre tracts in the Carson Sink Valley where various Piutes have been allotted and where a day school has been established. These Indians would never go there as it is away from their ancestral home, and would be in too close connection with the Piutes with whom these Indians do not affiliate. I know of no good land available in this locality unless a tract was bought which with the water right would cost considerable money.

Although the Superintendent was not anxious to spend money on the Washo, he suggested that a small farm might be bought for the old people, who were unable to work.[25] In 1912, the Superintendent of the Carson School described the Washo's lives: "They furnish the labor on most of the ranches, men assisting with the cattle, irrigating, farming, etc., while the women do washing and other house work." He also mentioned twenty-five elderly, crippled, and helpless Washo, suggesting that the government provide weekly rations for these needy people.[26] Two days later, the Superintendent wrote another letter adding more information: "Their homes consist of tents and mere shacks along roadsides, and on white ranchers' land wherever they are permitted to camp. They are self-supporting." He suggested that the government purchase land to provide homes and small gardens for the Washo. He estimated that twenty thousand dollars would buy an adequate tract of land with water rights.[27]

In 1913 and 1914, several resolutions and bills requested money to buy homes for the Washo. The Nevada legislature adopted a resolution urging the congressmen to "use all honorable means to obtain all necessary and proper relief and aid to the Washoe tribe of Indians in the way of obtaining parcels of land and water rights, furnishing them with farming implements and other necessaries to enable them to cultivate the soil, and assist them to become self-supporting." [28] Later that year, Congressman Roberts introduced a bill in the United States Congress.[29] A year later, Senator Newlands introduced a similar bill, providing for purchase of land with water rights and construction of homes.[30] The Special Indian Agent recommended that the bill be amended to include all Nevada Indians and to allow land to be purchased anywhere in the state rather than in Washo lands near Carson City and Gardnerville.[31] Despite these bills, no land was purchased for the Washo until 1917.

While the legislatures debated these resolutions, the Washo still faced the problem of trespassers. Often stockmen made no distinction between Washo lands and lands in the public domain. The whites, who felt that land was available on a "first come, first serve" basis, allowed their cattle to graze on the pine nut range, destroying Washo food. The Washo received no compensation for damage done by the grazing stock. Finally in 1913 and 1914, a lease agreement forced stockmen to pay the Washo for the lands they used. A notice was posted in post offices in California and Nevada, stating that "any and all persons occuping [sic] or using any Indian land for grazing, prospecting, mining or removing timber without the proper authority from this office are trespassers and may be prosecuted under the laws of the United States. . . ." [32] Grazing permits were issued to members of the Pine Nut Stockgrowers Association at a flat rate of one and one half cents per acre. The money collected from these permits was given to the Washo allotment owners once a year.[33]

The Washo received small amounts of money ranging from $1.80 to $2.40 a year, depending on the size of their allotments. This money was barely enough to buy food and clothing for the Washo, whose resources had been stolen and depleted by the whites. In order to receive their money, the applicants had to prove their identity to agents in the justice court room at Gardnerville. They had to answer a series of questions, give their Indian names as they had been recorded in 1893, and provide both the Indian and English names of their brothers and sisters. If all this information corresponded to government records, the agent then fingerprinted the applicant. Each Washo made prints of both his right and left thumbs on three cards. Then the agent filled out a check, which the applicant endorsed

The last of the "Captains" meet with a Nevada Governor: (left to right) Captain Pete Mayo, Sarah Mayo, Governor Emmet D. Boyle, and Captain Pete; (back row) Ben James and Henry "Moses" Rupert.

with his thumbprint.[34] The process was lengthy and frustrating. Since the agent did not know the Washo language, identification was both difficult and confusing. Later, when the Bureau of Indian Affairs took over the process and issued checks from its offices at Stewart, payments were made more smoothly.

In 1914, some Washo sent another petition to the government. Captain Pete, Captain Pete Mayo, and Sarah Mayo presented a specially-woven basket to President Wilson. Sarah Jim, wife of Captain Pete Mayo and daughter of "Old Captain Jim," wove the basket with the following inscription:[35]

NEVADA AND CALIFORNIA
CAPTAIN JAMES, 1ST CHIEF OF
WASHOE TRIBE
SARAH, I AM HIS DAUGHTER
THIS BASKET IS A SPECIAL CURIO
1913

A petition, signed March 28, 1914, accompanied the basket. The petition summarized the injustices done to the Washo and described the general condition of the tribe: "The committee presenting this memento desires that it be kept at the White House as a lasting token of the friendship of the Washoe Tribe towards the whites, and as a reminder of a tribe now becoming rapidly extinct." The petition listed specific grievances as well as general injustices: some allotted lands, twenty-five miles south of Carson, were rocky, barren, and desolate; whites took Washo timber, claiming that they had bought it from the government; the Washo had no land suitable for homes; finally, other Indians, who had been hostile to whites, received more aid than the Washo, who had not attacked the intruders. Since the land had been theirs long before the white man came, the Washo asked the government to allow them to hunt and fish without purchasing licenses. The Washo group requested better living conditions so that their people could continue.[36]

In 1914, a group of Washo presented this specially-woven basket, made by Sarah Mayo, to President Woodrow Wilson. (Courtesy of Dr. Warren L. d'Azevedo).

Woodrow Wilson wrote a letter thanking "all who were concerned in this gift;"[37] C. H. Ashbury, the Special Indian Agent, apparently forwarded this letter and a letter from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to Captain Pete.[38] No action seems to have resulted from the gift and the petition, however. E. B. Merritt, the Assistant Commissioner, wrote Captain Pete that the matters they mentioned were being investigated, ending his letter by suggesting that the Washo work through "the proper officials of the Indian Service" rather than appealing directly to the President and the Congress.[39]

For many years, the Washo had petitioned various government officials, asking that they be granted their rights. Time and time again, they listed injustices done to their tribe. Although many of these offenses clearly violated the law, the government did little to prevent them. In spite of the law, white trespassers continued to steal Washo resources from the allotments. While government officials made note of the petitions presented to them, they did nothing to act on the requests or help the Washo people. From the time of their first contacts with the white intruders, the Washo had suffered many injustices, both moral and physical. At times, it looked as if the many depredations would eventually destroy them, or at least diminish their numbers. Because of their perseverance and their strong tribal bonds, however, the Washo survived in spite of all these injustices.

The Twentieth Century

In the years preceding the First World War, the Washo had no reservation, no land suitable for homesites, and very little government assistance. Their status was not clearly defined. According to federal law, they were not even citizens of the United States. Although they were denied the privileges of citizenship, the Washo were expected to show their allegiance to the government. On April 25, 1914, they pledged their allegiance and were presented with an American flag in a ceremony at Gardnerville, Nevada. The event was widely advertised.[1] The invitations promised "good music, field sports, base ball, and the Stewart Cadets will give an exhibition drill . . . and a number of eminent speakers will be present."[2]

The day of the ceremony, "the largest crowd of white people and Indians that has ever gathered here at any occasion in the history of the town"[3] met in Gardnerville. Boys from the Carson Indian School marched all the way to the town in military formation; eighty girl students rode to the ceremony on the train. In the parade, the Indian band was a colorful and impressive sight: girls in red sweaters and boys in blue uniforms marched in step to the music, carrying a silk flag. A baseball game and a barbeque added to the festivities. A number of dignitaries, including the governor and lieutenant governor, made speeches which noted Indian achievements, particularly those of students at the Carson School. A large flag was presented to the Washo, who stood with their rights hands uplifted while the oath of allegiance was administered to them. Then, while the band played the "Star Spangled Banner," the flag was raised.[4] The ceremony, as Superintendent Mortsolf wrote the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, was intended to produce "a better understanding between the Indians and their White neighbors,"[5] and create good will between the two peoples.[6]

In 1917, however, when the United States entered the war with Germany, the good will vanished. Many Washo did not wish to join the military service. This stand was neither unpatriotic nor unjustified. At the time, the Indians had no homes and no reservation land. They did not become United States citizens until 1924. Since they enjoyed none of the privileges extended to white citizens, many Washo concluded that they should not have the responsibilities of citizens either. Letters from the Indian Service to the Washo, however, implied that Indians who refused to be drafted were disloyal. Government officials even argued that if the Indians assumed the duties of citizenship, they might receive its benefits later. As Agent Dorrington wrote to the Washo: "By his taking up the obligations of citizenship so readily in this time of need, it will be impossible to longer deny him the privileges of citizenship. So don't forget to register and abide by the selective draft orders." [7] In another letter, Dorrington followed a similar statement by saying that if the Indians refused to fight, they were "pro-German," and "will not be worthy of further consideration." [8] Thus the Washo were expected to take on the burdens of citizenship in anticipation of rights they had not yet been granted. Often, veiled threats accompanied statements urging the Washo to register.[9]

The Indian Service itself could not agree on a definition of citizenship for the Indians. As Dorrington noted, their condition and the rules which governed them varied from area to area. Because officials needed some definition of the Indians' status, they adopted a classification which established six possible groups:

> 1. Those who had received allotments and trust patents before May 8, 1906, under the Act of February 8, 1887, or any other act or treaty.
> 2. Those who had "abandoned tribal relations and adopted the habits of civilized life" and those who had received allotments and trust or restricted patents before May 8, 1906.
> 3. Those who had received allotments since May 8, 1906, and did not hold citizenship as defined in the second class, through their parents, or on any other grounds.
> 4. All Indians who had received patents in fee simple for any portion of their land.
> 5. Those who had been allotted land before May 8, 1906, but did not receive trust patents until a later date.
> 6. Those who still lived "in tribal relations" and had not received allotments.[10]

Indians in the first, second, and fourth classes were subject to both civil and criminal laws in the states where they lived. Those in the third and fifth classes who had not received fee patents, and all belonging in the sixth class, were subject only to federal jurisdiction.[11]

The Indian Service interpreted this classification to mean that all those entitled to citizenship were subject to the selective service draft. Although no Nevada Indian could vote in any election, and the Washo had no reservation, this system placed almost all Washo in the first two classes.[12] Under this policy, the Indian, who had been made an alien in his own land and enjoyed none of the rights of citizenship, was expected to bear its burdens. Despite this discrimination, five Washo men had joined the military service by May 1918.[13] Many more served their country both in and out of the armed forces. Many fought courageously in this war and in later conflicts.

During this time, the Washo faced other discrimination as well. In 1918 the Douglas County Council of Defense issued work cards to all Washo in the valley. These cards read: "All Indian ranch hands in Douglas County are expected to be employed during the coming haying season. Any Indian who will not work will be presecuted [sic] as a vagrant." [14] As Arthur Allen reported, the Washo resented this treatment, "as they object to being singled out, though they would not have objected to such a notice served on 'All ranch hands, both white and Indian'." [15] Agent Dorrington protested to the Defense Council, stating: "If the order were made to apply generally to all ranch hands, or to the unemployed, and *enforced impartially,* we would be glad to assist in every way in our power, as far as the Indian is concerned, but in its present form, we must decidedly object thereto." [16] The Council called a meeting for June 20, 1918, and invited discussion of the work orders.[17] Two days after this meeting, the director of the Council wrote to the Reno Indian Agency, refusing to recall the cards: "We do not believe that we can recall the cards, or issue others at this time as we feel in so doing we would negative a good work already done." [18] Despite the discriminatory nature of these work orders, a report the following year stated: "It is not believed that any attempt was made by the council in promulgating the order and distributing the notices to interfere with the lawful rights of these Indians or to discriminate against them. . . ." [19] Although none of these cards were issued to white men, the Council of Defense continued to claim that they made no racial distinction, and only issued the orders because every available hand was needed on the ranches.

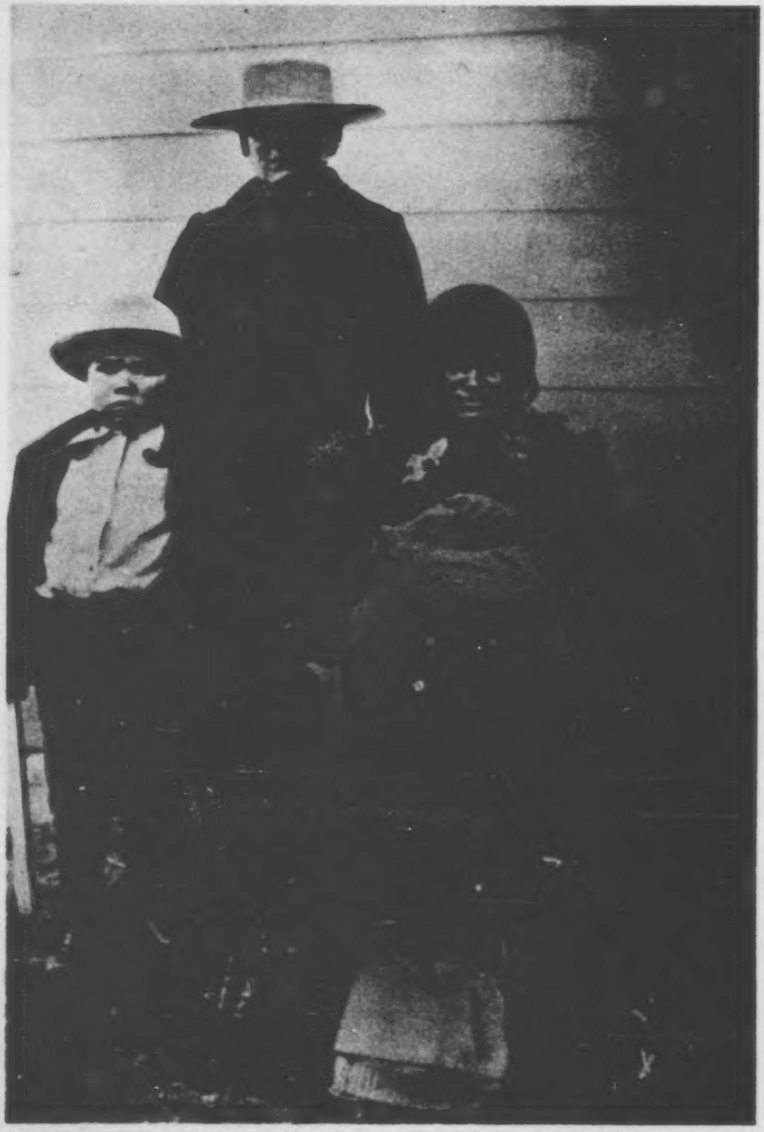
The Washo provided an important labor source for farms and ranches in the valley. When whites first came to Carson Valley they paid the Indians as little as twenty-five or fifty cents a day. A 1918 report on the pine nut allotments indicates that white farmers in the area depended on Washo labor: "Their labor is eagerly sought after and in great demand for general ranch use and especially in caring for seasonal crops such as hay and grain harvesting, potatoe digging, etc. Hay hands are paid from $3 to $4 per day and found, potatoe diggers and pickers from $3 for men and $2 for women, board and transportation included."[20] The ranchers depended on Indian labor to harvest their crops.

As the 1918 report on the Washo allotments indicated, the Washo still had problems with their lands. The pine nut trees had been cut down, the game destroyed. The barren, rocky, dry lands were of little use to the people. As the report stated, the Washo "practically speaking, has been deprived of all his former means of making a living except that of gathering the crop of pine nuts. . . ."[21] This meant that the people had to make their living doing whatever work they could find on the ranches in the area.

The report, prepared by Lorenzo Creel and submitted to the Commissioner by L. A. Dorrington, made several recommendations. A study of timber in the allotted lands showed that, from a commercial point of view, the remaining timber resources were worth little. Most of the wood could only be used as fire wood. Mountain cedar, which could also be used to make fence posts, was neither abundant nor widespread. To transport the wood in any quantity to valley markets, roads were needed. Therefore, timber on the allotments would not provide significant income for the Washo.[22] The land could be used for grazing, but would only be profitable if it were leased in a body. The report recommended that the land be sold or leased as a whole to insure a small annual revenue for each allottee. If the land were sold (at a flat rate of $1.25 per acre) the money could be used to buy homes or tracts of land with water rights.[23] Dorrington, in the letter accompanying Creel's report, suggested: "It would be still better if these lands [the allotments] could be set aside as a reserve for the Washoe Indians and smaller valley tracts provided for by Congress. We have not done much for them thus far."[24] While official reports acknowledged the need to do something about the allotments, white trespassers continued to encroach on Washo land. Captain Pete entered a complaint about whites picking pine nuts without permission. One party even drove an old Washo woman away from the area where she was gathering pine nuts, stealing her nuts and cursing her. The Washo protested, asking the Indian Agent to post signs stating that the Pine Nut Hills belonged to them. As they told the agent, pine nuts "are just as valuable to the Indian as grain and vegetable crops are to the white people."[25] Again and again, the same problems recurred.

"It was not until 1917 — sixty-three years after the California taking date and fifty-four years after the Nevada taking date — that the United States began purchasing [land] for the Washo."[26] Until this time, many public officials encouraged and promoted white exploitation of Washo lands. The Washo received no reservation land and very little government assistance. No treaties were made with the Washo. Essentially, the American government ignored them. Only their tenacity and strong tribal unity enabled them to survive the injustices.[27]

In 1917, most Washo still lived in and around the towns and ranches where they worked. They could not use their allotments for homesites or farmland because all the water rights had been preempted by whites. Despite some local opposition, land was purchased for the Washo in 1917. In January and February two tracts of land near Carson City were purchased for $3500. This land, which included the Blackie Ranch and the Little Ranch, became the Carson Indian Colony. The two ranches contained a total of 156.33 acres.[28] Shortly after this purchase, the government received 40 acres of land from William F. Dressler and his wife. This land, located on a flat south of Gardnerville, was to be held in trust for the Washo. If the tribe ever stopped living at the Dresslerville site, the land would revert to the heirs of the Dressler family.[29] Finally, in April 1917, an additional 20 acres were acquired for Washo and Northern Paiute families who lived in Reno. This land formed the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony. Although the Indian Service Office also hoped to find more land near Genoa, none was purchased in that area.[30]



This photograph shows a Washo family at Virginia City in the early 1900's. (Courtesy of Dr. Warren d'Azevedo).

Although much of the land purchased for the Washo was largely wasteland, with poor soil and many rocks, the people moved to these areas and built the best homes they could. Many were one room shacks without electricity or modern conveniences. In time, the government built larger four-room houses. Although the tribe acquired land for homesites, the people remained under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In the following years, the Washo found the restrictions of reservation life a hardship. They no longer were able to travel freely to hunt and fish on their ancestral lands. They were pressured to adopt white ways and renounce their ancient customs. Until the tribe formed a governing body under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, the Reno Indian Agency took charge of tribal affairs. Often, the office tried to "civilize" the Washo and "prevent corruption" among them. To the white officials, this meant eliminating Washo traditions.

In 1922 and 1923, the Superintendent of the Reno Agency objected to many ancient Washo ceremonies. He complained that Washo parents took their children out of school to gather pine nuts.[31] He stated that "Indians will never become civilized as long as they are permitted to follow old 'customs' harmful to their advancement. . ."[32] Describing Washo customs as "heathenish," "savage," and "barbarous," he urged that they be "abolished" or at least curbed as quickly as possible.[33] In his reports, he attacked a number of Washo customs which were no more "savage" than white customs.

First, he tried to eliminate the puberty dance which marked a young girl's passage to womanhood. He claimed that the dances distracted the Indians from their work and took children from school. The superintendent thought that the food and money always given as gifts at the ceremny could not be spared. He found both the ceremony itself and the games which accompanied it "heathen" and immoral.[34] The girl's dance, however, had always been part of Washo culture. In fact, its practices were no more immoral than the customs at parties where white people celebrated marriages and birthdays.

The superintendent, James E. Jenkins, also discouraged traditional Washo handgames. On March 24, 1923, he wrote to the Indians under his agency: "You are hereby notified that gambling by means of cards, sticks, tokens, or other devices, by which money or other things of value are pledged or forfeited, is not permitted on Government lands or Indian Reservations."[35] While the official forbade traditional Washo games, he issued no proclamations prohibiting similar white recreations, like poker games, where gambling also occurred.

On the same day, Jenkins issued another notice outlawing traditional Washo medicine. The letter began: "The practice of so-called Indian 'Medicine Men' or 'Indian Doctors' who have no state license to carry on the practice of medicine or healing, is against the laws of the State and contrary to the regulations of the Government. Such practices, by persons without education or medical training, cannot help anyone, and very often proves [sic] harmful. . . ."[36] Although Jenkins had noted in another report that the Indian doctor not only healed physical ills, but also served as "a spiritual adviser, judge in civil and political matters of the tribe as well as in family disturbances. . . ," he felt that the doctors did not help their people.[37] Like other white officials, he did not understand the benefits these traditional ceremonies brought to the Washo. Although men like Jenkins rejected traditions which were foreign to their own culture, they provided little to replace these customs. Instead of helping the Washo, they often made laws to suppress traditional Indian ways of life. During this period, when the Washo were under the supervision of the Reno Agency, white officials frequently tried to eliminate Indian customs.

During this time, the Carson Indian Agency provided medical services and police for the colonies.[38] In 1929, J. Winfield Scott, a Baptist minister who had been active at Dresslerville, wrote to Nevada Senator Tasker L. Oddie. He described conditions at Dresslerville and recommended improvements. At that time, nearly three hundred Washo lived on the forty-acre plot; about two hundred more frequently visited the site. A water system had been installed. The Dresslerville Public School taught the children and served hot lunches daily. The Baptists had built a church near the colony,[39] which was used as a community center where tribal meetings could be held. The Baptists also provided weekly religious services and established clubs, including a sewing club.[40] In his letter, Scott asked for several improvements, including electricity, fire hydrants, an extension of the telephone line, and a policeman's house and salary. Scott, who served as the president of the Dresslerville Indian Improvement Association, reported that they had improved the streets, planted shade trees, and made other repairs. He concluded his letter by praising the Washo: "A few years ago the Washoes were a disheartened, downcast tribe of Indians, but with the little encouragement they have been given, they have made great headway. . . ." [41]

At this time, Washo lived at Dresslerville, Carson Colony, and the Reno-Sparks Colony, as well as in the Markleeville and Woodfords area, and the vicinity of Doyle and Loyalton. Small groups also lived on and near white ranches in the Carson and Washoe Valleys.[42] Many still gathered traditional foods when they could. Some families dried acorns gathered on the western slopes of the Sierras.[43] Families killed deer in season and hunted jack rabbits.[44] The Washo still gathered pine nuts, saving part of the crop for food and marketing the rest. In 1935, families in the Dresslerville Colony obtained an average income of fifty dollars from the sale of pine nuts. Allotment holders also received grazing fees of two and a half cents per acre.[45] In 1936, Washo sold the nuts for about six cents a pound. The wholesale dealer in Reno received about seventeen cents a pound; the pine nuts retailed for thirty-five cents. In Salt Lake City, the nuts sold at a retail price of sixty-five cents a pound.[46] Washo still worked for ranchers in the area and found other jobs in nearby towns. In 1938, the Wa-Pai-Shone Craft Cooperative, organized by Alida Bowler, gave Washo women a market for their baskets and other craft items.[47] In 1936, seven new homes were built at Dresslerville with funds provided by the Resettlement Administration.[48] The Dresslerville public school and the Carson, Sherman, and Phoenix Indian Schools provided education for the children. The Dresslerville school, which adjoined the colony, was staffed by three teachers. The lunch program at the school gave each child a balanced hot meal at noon.[49]

The Carson Indian School provided training for many Washo children. Alida Bowler, Superintendent of the School, outlined its progress in 1935. The facility, which had begun with a single building, had 29. The school originally had occupied 240 acres; its land had been increased to 366 acres. Much of the land was under cultivation. The grounds had been landscaped, "with irrigated lawns, flower beds, and growths of cottonwood trees." The school,

Mike and Bertha Holbrook, Goldie Bryan, and children, standing with Reverend Scott, were early residents of Dresslerville. Job's Peak is in the background. (Courtesy of Bertha Holbrook).

In the early twentieth century, the Dresslerville Women's Sewing Club was established (Courtesy of Bertha Holbrook).

which had a capacity for 500 pupils, drew students from Nevada, California, Oregon, Idaho, and Utah. It provided 12 grades of vocational training, and some elementary instruction. For boys, the training program included mechanics, carpentry, masonry, agriculture, animal husbandry, and related aspects of science, math, and

Three Washo students of the Carson Indian School are shown here: (left to right) Frank Rivers, Richard E. Barrington (the first graduate of the school), and John P. Jones. (Courtesy of Mary Rusco, University of Nevada).

English. Girls learned cooking, sewing, child care, home management, and other domestic skills. By 1935, students who worked at the school received a small wage. Recreational programs and health facilities had been developed. Sports, like swimming, tennis, basketball, football, and baseball, were part of the program. Children could join the forty member school orchestra and receive training in Indian art, music, and drama. In the spring, the school put on a pageant based on Indian legends, songs, and dances.[50] Several Washo students who attended the school later became prominent citizens.

Richard Barrington, the first child enrolled at the school, also belonged to the first graduating class. He was born on the Truckee River at Boca around 1880. When he was about seven years old, his mother and grandparents took him to Carson City to enroll him in the new school for Indian children. He also attended the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, and toured the country with its famous Indian marching band. Later, he worked at a number of jobs and became a successful business man. With his son, he opened the Plumas Lumber Company at Gray's Flat. In 1934 and 1939, he expanded his business, building mills at Quincy and Sierraville. Throughout his life, Richard Barrington used his experience and skills to help Indian people. In 1914, Barrington had formed the Forty-Niner Camp Band. The twenty Indian musicians played at the San Francisco World's Fair for a year. He started several other bands and led the band at the Stewart School. He became interested in Indian welfare early in his life. In 1915, he helped to organize California Indians Incorporated, one of the first associations in the west which supported Indian interests. Richard Barrington and his son Lloyd took part in both the California Indian's and the Washoe's land claims suits. In 1963, Richard Barrington travelled to Washington, D.C., to testify on Washo territory, history, and culture at the Washoe Claims Case hearings. A year later, the University of Nevada honored him by awarding him the Distinguished Nevadan title. Barrington, who died in 1967, accomplished many things for the Indian people.[51]

John Henry Dressler, another famous graduate of the Carson School, was born in Sheridan, Nevada, February 27, 1916. In 1922, he enrolled at the school. He was active in sports and was elected the first student body president. Although he was awarded a scholarship to Northeastern Teachers College in Oklahoma, he could not afford to travel there. Dressler worked at a series of jobs, including work with the railroad and as a structural ironworker. Through the years, he held a number of leadership positions and was elected a union steward. All of this experience, combined with his concern for Indian programs, helped him when he met with other Indian leaders to form an inter-tribal council. John Dressler helped plan the council, served as a temporary chairman, and, in 1963 when tribal leaders met at Winnemucca to establish it, became its chairman. He held this position from 1958 to 1969. During this time, he also served as chairman of the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony and the Washoe Tribe. He lobbied actively for an organization to serve as a liason office between the Indians and other state agencies. His work led to the creation of the Nevada Indian Affairs Commission. Like Richard Barrington, John Henry Dressler was awarded the Distinguished Nevadan title.[52]

A third graduate, John B. Keliiaa, also became a prominent citizen. Keliiaa, whose mother was a Washo, was raised by his maternal grandparents in the Dresslerville Colony. Graduating from the Carson Indian School in 1942, he became a distinguished Air Force copilot in World War II. After the war, he attended the University of California at Berkeley, where he excelled in both scholarship and athletics. He was elected to Pi Sigma Alpha, the political science honorary, and Phi Beta Kappa, the highest honorary scholarship society.[53] Keliiaa, who believed strongly in Indian self-government, began a career in the Bureau of Indian Affairs as a Management Trainee in 1950. He was promoted rapidly: seven years later he was appointed the Superintendent of the Jicarilla Apache Agency at Dulce, New Mexico. There, he earned the respect of tribal members and helped initiate a number of programs.[54] When he died suddenly in 1962, Keliiaa was mourned by many people. John B. Keliiaa, the first person of Indian descent to be nominated for the Arthur S. Fleming award, was posthumously presented with the Distinguished Service award, the highest honor of the Department of the Interior.[55]

Education helped many Washo adjust to the massive changes the white men had brought to their lands; a new religion also helped some people deal with these changes.[56] In 1936, a native religion which emphasized Indian ways was introduced in Washo land. Ben Lancaster, who was half Washo, brought peyotism to the Washo area.[57] The religion's followers, who believed in a supreme being very much like the Christian God, used peyote, a cactus plant, in their ceremonies. Peyote healed and protected the worshipper, who used the plant as an intermediary between himself and the deity. Almost all peyotists prohibited drinking alcoholic beverages. The religion also encouraged virtues like charity and honesty. To achieve happiness, an individual had to have ambition and hope.[58] For active believers, the religion provided both physical and spiritual comfort.[59] Peyotism, however, was not widely accepted in Washo country; by 1938, Lancaster had lost many of his early followers.[60] Although the doctrine was not widely accepted by Washo, even today

The Washo Tribal Ranch Manager, Willie Smokey, is shown branding cattle on the Washo Ranch in 1951. (Courtesy of Romaine Smokey, Sr.)

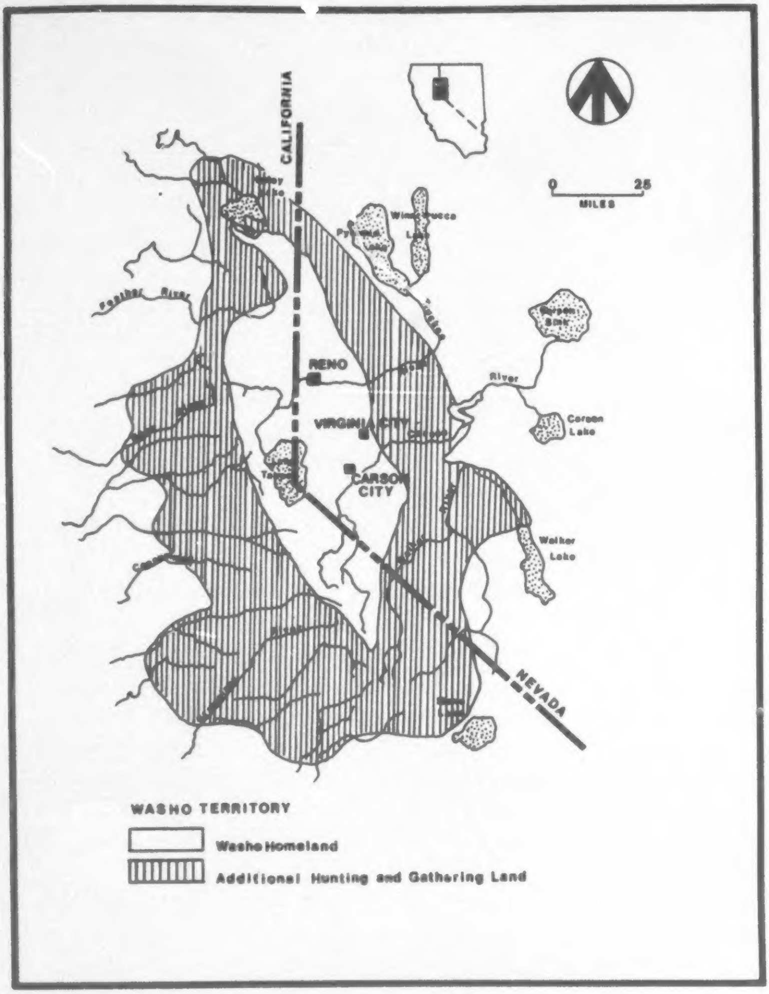
some devout Washo follow the teachings of the peyotists, now known as the Native American Church.

Under the provisions of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, the Washo began to form a tribal government. Calling themselves the Washoe Tribe of California and Nevada, they organized a constitution and by-laws. On February 27, 1937, they were issued a corporate charter and recognized as a formally organized tribe. Through the Indian Reorganization Act, the Washo acquired additional land in Carson Valley between 1938 and 1940. The 795 acres, known as the Washoe Ranch, were purchased to provide agricultural land where the Washo could raise food and livestock.[61]

For the first time, the Washo had farm lands. With the help of an agent from the Carson Agency farm, they developed a dairy herd, raised hogs and sheep, and grew crops like potatoes and peaches. In the early years, the ranch was fruitful and provided a substantial income for the Washo.[62] Later, production declined and the lands were leased to non-Indian ranchers. In 1952, the leases provided a gross income of approximately ten thousand dollars. In 1953, most Washo income, however, still came from wages. Washo worked in mills, on nearby ranches, and as domestics. Women sold craftwork through the Wa-Pai-Shone Craftsmen, Inc.[63] Fred Forbush, an artist and the manager of Wa-Pai-Shone, said that the Washo women made the finest baskets. He stated that Washo basketry was the true art of Nevada at the time.[64]

For many Washo, the 1940's and 1950's proved disappointing times. Often it seemed that little progress had been made. The creation of the Indian Claims Commission in 1946 offered new hope to the people. The Commission was created to hear and settle all Indian claims involving land that had been taken from Indian people without compensation. Until the Commission was established, tribes who wanted to obtain compensation had to procure a special Congressional act. With the Commission, the Washo and other tribes could hope to obtain some recompense for the lands and resources they had lost.

On April 21, 1948, Washo tribal members met to decide whether they would file a claim. With the approval of the members, the tribal council employed lawyers to file a claim on their behalf. On August 10, 1951, the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California


CALIFORNIA
NEVADA
0
25
MILES
Honey Lake
Pyramid Lake
Winnemucca Lake
Feather River
Truckee
River
Carson Sink
RENO
VIRGINIA CITY
Carson Lake
Tahoe
CARSON CITY
Walker Lake
WASHO TERRITORY
Washo Homeland
Additional Hunting and Gathering Land

officially filed their petition. The proceedings lasted nearly twenty years. Richard Barrington, who gave much time and money to the case, travelled to Washington, D.C. to testify. Finally, in 1970, the legal arguments were resolved. The government had significantly reduced the land area that the Washo claimed. Therefore, the Washo received much less money than they had petitioned for. The final settlement, approximately five million dollars, "scarcely constitutes even a token compensation for the appropriation of an ancient territory and its resources which today comprise one of the richest and most attractive areas in the American West."[65] The land, the fish, the game, and the timber, however, are gone. No settlement can restore them to the Washo. But the Washo plan to use the money they receive wisely. Seventy per cent of the final award will be invested for the general welfare of the tribe, to provide education and other benefits for the people. The rest of the money will be paid directly to tribal members.

The same year the Claims Case was decided, a special act of Congress granted eighty acres in Alpine County, California, to the Washo. Washo had lived in this area, now known as the Woodfords Colony, for many years.

Today the Washo tribe has many plans to develop its land and improve the lives of its members. In 1966, the Washo organized a tribal council. Two members from Carson, Dresslerville, and Woodfords Colonies, one representative from Reno-Sparks Colony, and two non-reservation delegates make up the nine-member council, which governs approximately twelve hundred tribal members. Through the tribal council, the Washo have planned a number of projects to improve their living conditions, provide job opportunities, construct homes and other facilities, and work with other Nevada tribal councils. The Washo also belong to the Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada.[66]

Today, many Washo live on the Carson Colony, the Dresslerville Colony, and the Woodfords Colony. Other tribal members live away from the colonies, many in the Reno and San Francisco area. At each of the colonies, residents have developed goals and plans for the future.[67]

Carson Colony, located in a residential area near Carson City, Nevada, has a five-member council. In 1973, they established a list of goals for the colony which included developing public services, landscaping, providing a community center and recreation facilities, building more housing, and restricting the encroachment of commercial enterprises to preserve the residential character of the area.[68]

In 1972, 291 Washo people lived in the Dresslerville Colony and worked in the surrounding region. The colony is the closest to the Pine Nut Mountains. Its council planned several projects, including new housing, improved community facilities, a center for colony functions and recreation, improved roads, and commercial and industrial development.[69]

The Washo Ranch adjoins the Dresslerville Colony. The Ranch, which has excellent water rights, requires some improvements. For many years, the land was leased to non-Indian farmers. Today the tribal council hopes to make it a successful Washo business, producing alfalfa, hay, cattle, and horses. The council has also considered plans for recreational facilities in the area.[70]

The Woodfords Colony, located between the East and West Forks of the Carson River, is midway between Lake Tahoe and the Pine Nut Mountains. The colony council and the Washo Nation Tribal Council adopted a plan in 1972 which calls for development of streets, homesites, a water system, recreational facilities, and a community center.[71]

Between 1966 and 1976, the Washo tribe undertook several major projects. In 1966, a ten-unit housing program for the Dresslerville Colony was funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. When these homes were completed, funding was granted for twenty additional homes at Carson Colony, which were finished in 1972. At present, other homes are to be built in Woodfords, Dresslerville and Carson Colonies. In 1973, with a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, the Washo began to construct an overnight campground with an administration building on the Carson River. This project was completed in 1975. While it was under way, federal funding became available for a building to house tribal offices. This building, located on U.S. 395 south of Gardnerville, contains various offices, including those of the Chairman, the Indian Action Team, and the Housing Authority.[72]

Washo today have made much progress toward their goals, but they retain many aspects of their culture. Some ancient ceremonies are still observed, although their forms have been modified. A child is still blessed at birth and given a one-month dinner. The girls' dance still honors a young woman's passage to adulthood. Many traditional foods are still gathered and eaten. The Washo hold rabbit drives, using shotguns instead of nets, clubs, and arrows. They still relish pine nuts and acorns, prepared in traditional ways. They eat deer meat, but do not hunt for trophies or waste food like some non-Indian hunters. Many have renewed interest in their own past: ". . . there is a revival among young people of concern for the history, language, and culture, which many of them had rejected in their childhood, but now cherish as a precious heritage."[73] Washo cherish what remains of their ancient land and resources; they are prepared to go to court to preserve it if necessary. White intrusion has brought many changes to the Washo's lives. In spite of many difficulties, however, the people have endured, preserving as much of their way of life as they could. Today, as they face the future, they remember an old Washo saying which explains that "the reason the Washo were a small tribe was because they were meant to be so, because they would become the most powerful some day—small but powerful."

Footnotes

WA SHE SHU E DEH (WASHO LANDS)

[1] Interview with Jean Dexter, Washo, Carson Indian Colony, Carson City, Nevada, February 2, 1975, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #109).

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] John A. Price, "Washo Culture Change," *Nevada State Museum Anthropological Papers,* No. 9, Carson City, Nevada, January 1963, p. 41.

[4] Findings of Fact, Washoe Claims Case, U.S. Indian Claims Commission, Docket 288, 21. 477, p. 465.

[5] Testimony of Omer C. Stewart, Washoe Claims Case, U.S. Indian Claims Commission, Docket 288, July 9, 1955, pp. 121, 128-130.

[6] Interview with Elaine Christensen, Washo, Woodfords, California, October 24, 1974, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #102).

[7] Interview with Bertha Holbrook, Washo, Fallon, Nevada, October 22, 1974, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #108). The term *Dey lu le* refers to the particular time of year just before spring comes. *Dey lu le* did not always occur in February, since it depended on the weather.

[8] Interview with Amy James, Washo, Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, Reno, Nevada, October -23, 1975, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #100).

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] *Ibid.*; also James F. Downs, *The Two Worlds of the Washo* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1966), pp. 14-15.

[12] Stanley A. Freed, "Washo Habitation Sites in the Lake Tahoe Area," manuscript (Berkeley: University of California, 1954), p. 75.

[13] Bertha Holbrook, File #108.

[14] Interview with Don and Winona James, Washo, Carson Indian Colony, Nevada, January 31, 1975, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #101).

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] Interview with Don and Winona James, Washo, Carson Indian Colony, Nevada, January 28, 1975, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #101).

[18] *Ibid.*; also Stanley A. Freed, "Changing Washo Kinship," *University of California Anthropological Records,* 14, No. 6, p. 37.

[19] Interview with Elaine Christensen, Washo, Woodfords, California, December 2, 1975, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #102).

[20] Downs, p. 18.

[21] Interview with Helen Nevers Enos, Washo, Auburn, California, August 26, 1974, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #110).

[22] Elaine Christensen, File #102.

[23] Don and Winona James, January 28, 1975, File #101.

[24] Amy James, October 23, 1975, File #100.

[25] *Ibid.;* also Downs, pp. 25–26.

[26] Interview with Nancy Wade, Dresslerville, Nevada, April 1, 1975, interviewer Shirley Frank (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #103).

[27] Freed, "Changing Washo Kinship," p. 353.

[28] Interview with Jean Dexter, Washo, Carson Indian Colony, Carson City, Nevada, February 7, 1975, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #109).

[29] Stanley A. Freed and Ruth S. Freed, "The Persistence of Aboriginal Ceremonies Among the Washo Indians," *The Washo Indians of California and Nevada,* ed. Warren L. d'Azevedo, *University of Utah Anthropological Papers,* No. 67 (August 1963), pp. 34–36.

[30] Stewart testimony, pp. 132–3.

[31] Downs, p. 22.

[32] Elaine Christensen, File #102.

[33] Amy James, October 23, 1975, File #100.

[34] Elaine Christensen, File #102.

[35] *Ibid.* The Washo made special stirring sticks *(ba lay yuk)* by shaping chokecherry branches to form a hoop.

[36] Interview with Duane and Marada Wade, Washo, Woodfords, California, February 26, 1975, interviewer Floyd Wade (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #104); also Downs, p. 35.

[37] Duane and Marada Wade, File #104.

[38] Edward S. Curtis, *The North American Indian,* Vol. 15, ed. Frederick Webb Hodge (Norwood, Mass: The Plimpton Press, 1926), p. 92.

[39] Don James, File #101.

[40] Duane and Marada Wade, File #104.

[41] *Ibid.*

[42] Elaine Christensen, October 24, 1974, File #102.

[43] Nancy Wade, File #103.

[44] Elaine Christensen, October 24, 1974, File #102.

[45] Interview with Marvin Dressler, Washo, Dresslerville, Nevada, March 26, 1975, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #105).

[46] *Ibid.*

[47] Nancy Wade, File #103.

[48] Interview with Frank Morgan, Washo, Chicago Park, California, March 30, 1975, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #107).

[49] John Charles Fremont, *Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842* (Washington, D.C.: Blair & Rives, Printers, 1845), pp. 224–5, 230, 234.

[50] Bertha Holbrook, File #108.

[51] *Ibid.*; also John A. Price, "Washo Economy," *Nevada State Museum Anthropological Papers, No. 6,* Carson City, Nevada, June 1962, p. 32.

[52] *Ibid.*; also, interview with Irene Dick, April 22, 1974, translator Marvin Dressler (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File and Tape #21).

[53] A. L. Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1925), p. 571.

[54] Elaine Christensen, December 2, 1975, File #102.

[55] *Ibid.*

GEH SHA (WASHO LIFE)

[1] Plaintiff's Proposed Findings of Fact and Brief, Washoe Claims Case, U.S. Indian Claims Commission, Docket 288, Finding 4.

[2] Testimony of Omer Stewart, Washoe Claims Case, U.S. Indian Claims Commission, Docket 288, July 9, 1955, p. 126.

[3] Interview with Bertha Holbrook, Washo, Fallon, Nevada, October 22, 1974, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #108).

[4] Interview with Elaine Christensen, Washo, Woodfords, California, December 2, 1975, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #102).

[5] Interview with Duane and Marada Wade, Washo, Woodfords, California, February 26, 1975, interviewer Floyd Wade (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #104).

[6] Interview with Amy James, Washo, Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, Reno, Nevada, October 23, 1975, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #100).

[7] Bertha Holbrook, File #108.

[8] Interview with Margie George, Washo, Carson Valley, Nevada, January 31, 1975, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #106).

[9] Amy James, File #100.

[10] Elaine Christensen, December 2, 1975, File #102.

[11] Margie George, File #106.

[12] Bertha Holbrook, File #108.

[13] Interview with Amy James, Washo, Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, Reno, Nevada, October 2, 1974, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #100).

[14] Bertha Holbrook, File #108; also, John Andrew Price, "Washo Economy," *Nevada State Museum Anthropological Papers*, No. 6, Carson City, Nevada, June 1962, p. 46; and James F. Downs, *The Two Worlds of the Washo* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966), pp. 35–6.

[15] Bertha Holbrook, File #108.

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] Elaine Christensen, File #102; also Amy James, File #100.

[19] Stanley A. Freed and Ruth S. Freed, "The Persistence of Aboriginal Ceremonies Among the Washo Indians," *The Washo Indians of California and Nevada*, ed. Warren L. d'Azevedo, *University of Utah Anthropological Papers*, No. 67 (August 1963), pp. 34–6.

[20] *Ibid.*

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] Interview with Marvin Dressler, Washo, Dresslerville, Nevada, October 29, 1975, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #105).

[24] Interview with Nancy Wade, Washo, Dresslerville, Nevada, April 1, 1975, interviewer Shirley Frank (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #103).

[25] Interview with Amy James, Washo, Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, Reno, Nevada, January 30, 1975, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #100).

[26] Interview with Elaine Christensen, Washo, Woodfords, California, October 24, 1974, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #102).

[27] Amy James, October 23, 1975, File #100; also Elaine Christensen, December 2, 1975, File #102.

[28] Amy James, October 23, 1975, File #100.

[29] Elaine Christensen, December 2, 1975, File #102.

[30] *Ibid.*

[31] Amy James, October 23, 1975, File #100.

[32] Bertha Holbrook, File #108; also Downs, p. 59.

WEH HAI GE GE A (WASHO TRADITIONS)

[1] Harold Wyatt, "Washo Legends" (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #115). All subsequent material on legends, unless otherwise noted, comes from this source.

[2] Interview with Pearl Aster, Washo, Reno, Nevada, interviewers Romaine Smokey, Jr., and Marvin Dressler (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File and Tape #23).

[3] Interview with Elaine Christensen, Washo, Woodfords, California, December 2, 1975, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #102); also Harold Wyatt, File #115.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Pearl Aster, File and Tape #23.

[6] Interview with Amy James, Washo, Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, Nevada, January 30, 1975, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #100).

[7] Told to the author by her father, John Nevers.

[8] Pearl Aster, File and Tape #23.

DA GASHU WETI (WHITE FACES)

[1] S. F. Cook, "Colonial Expeditions to the Interior of California: Central Valley, 1800–1820," *University of California Anthropological Records*, 16 (1961), pp. 239–292.

[2] Interview with Jean Dexter, Washo, Carson Colony, Nevada, December 4, 1974, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #109); also, William H. Jacobsen, Jr., "Washo Linguistic Studies," *The Current Status of Anthropological Research in the Great Basin: 1964*, eds. Warren L. d'Azevedo et al. (Reno: Desert Research Institute, 1966), p. 128.

[3] Cook, pp. 251, 275.

[4] Gloria Griffen Cline, *Exploring the Great Basin* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), p. 185.

[5] John C. Fremont, *Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842* (Washington D.C.: Blair & Rives, Printers, 1845), pp. 226–7.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 224–5.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 225.

[8] Lorenzo D. Creel, Special Supervisor, "Report on Washoe Indian Allotments," to Colonel L. A. Dorrington, Special Agent, October 12, 1918. RG 75, Letters Received, National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California.

[9] Fremont, pp. 225–6.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 226.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 227.

[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 228–9.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 230.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 234.

[15] W. T. Hamilton, *My Sixty Years on the Plains: Trapping, Trading, and Indian Fighting*, ed. E. T. Sieber (New York: Forest and Stream Publishing Co., 1905), p. 159.

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 159–61.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 162.

[18] William Winter and Overton Johnson, *Route Across the Rocky Mountains* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1932), p. 127.

[19] Interview with Marvin Dressler, Washo, Dresslerville, Nevada, February 26, 1975, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #105); also, interview with Bertha Holbrook, Washo, Fallon, Nevada, October 22, 1975, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #108).

[20] Interview with Frank Morgan, Washo, Chicago Park, California, August 6, 1974, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #107).

[21] Interview with Elaine Christensen, Washo, Woodfords, California, October 24, 1974, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #102).

[22] Interview with Marvin Dressler, Washo, Dresslerville, Nevada, March 26, 1975, interviewer Jo Ann Nevers (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Archives Project, File #105); also, Bertha Holbrook, File #108.

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[4] Colonel John Reese, "Mormon Station," 1884, rpt. *Nevada Historical Society Papers* (Carson City, Nevada: State Printing Office, 1917), p. 188.

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[6] Angel, p. 31.

[7] Letter from J. H. Holeman, Indian Agent, to Luke Lea, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, November 28, 1851. RG 75, Letters Received, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (Microfilm copy).

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[14] Personal communication from Warren L. d'Azevedo to Jo Ann Nevers, based on data, field notes, and tape recorded interviews collected in 1954.

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[16] James F. Downs, *The Two Worlds of the Washo* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), p. 75.

[17] Angel, p. 531.

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[20] Letter from James W. Nye, Governor of Nevada Territory, to Caleb B. Smith, Secretary of the Interior, August 14, 1861. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1861*, p. 109.

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[24] Letter from John Reese to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Utah Territory, February 3, 1861. RG 75, Letters Received, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (Microfilm copy).

[25] Summary from Washoe Exhibits Filed at the Liability Trial of Information Used in Murray Appraisal, Washoe Claims Case, U.S. Indian Claims Commission, Docket 288, p. 6.

[26] Lorenzo D. Creel, "Report on Washoe Indian Allotments," to Colonel L. A. Dorington, Special Agent, October 12, 1918, p. 12. RG 75, National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California.

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[33] Plaintiff's Proposed Findings of Fact and Brief, Washoe Claims Case. U.S. Indian Claims Commission, Docket 288, Finding 61.

[34] Findings of Fact, Washoe Claims Case, U.S. Indian Claims Commission, Docket 288, October 31, 1969, p. 469.

[35] Letter from H. Douglas, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, to E. S. Parker, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 20, 1870. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1870*, pp. 558–60.

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[41] *Life Stories of Our Native People*, p. 13.

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[2] Letter from Michael Piggot, Special Alloting Agent, to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, April 8, 1893. RG 75, Letters Received, National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California.

[3] Creel, p. 15.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] James F. Downs, *The Two Worlds of the Washo* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966), p. 76.

[6] Letter from Calvin H. Asbury, Superintendent of Carson Training School, to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, December 29, 1909. RG 75, Letters Received, National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California.

[7] Letter from Calvin H. Asbury, Special Indian Agent, to Captain Pete, April 5, 1912. RG 75, National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California.

[8] Letter from George B. Cosby, Special Indian Agent, to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, June 10, 1895. RG 75, Letters Received, National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California. Government officials used the derogatory name, "Diggers," to refer to Indians who dug roots for food. They used this degrading name for most California Indians.

[9] Notice "To all whom it may concern" from John E. Jones, Governor of Nevada, June 17, 1895. Nevada Historical Society Archives, Reno, Nevada.

[10] Notice "To whom it may concern," from S. Summerfield, U.S. Attorney, Nevada, December 9, 1897. Nevada Historical Society Archives, Reno, Nevada.

[11] Notice "To whom it may concern," from Peter J. Shields, Executive Department, Sacramento, California, December 7, 1897. Nevada Historical Society Archives, Reno, Nevada.

[12] Letter from Eugene Mead, Superintendent of Carson Indian School, to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, May 29, 1897. RG 75, Letters Received, National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California.

[13] Letter from Erwin S. Sadler to J. D. Torreyson, Carson City, Nevada, December 5, 1898. Nevada Historical Society Archives, Reno, Nevada.

[14] Notice "To all whom it may concern" from C. A. Harris, U.S. Land Office, Carson City, Nevada, November 8, 1899. Nevada Historical Society Archives, Reno, Nevada.

[15] Notice "To whom it may concern," Gardnerville, Nevada, April 12, 1899. Nevada Historical Society Archives, Reno, Nevada.

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[18] "Frank John Rivers, Early Graduate of Stewart Indian School, Alma Mater of the Wa-Pai-Shone," *The Reno Evening Gazette*, January 17, 1962.

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[26] Letter from the Superintendent of the Carson Indian School to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, "Report on the Washoe Indians," April 16, 1912. RG 75, Letters Received, National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California.

[27] Letter from the Superintendent of the Carson Indian School to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, April 17, 1912. RG 75, Letters Received, National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California.

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[29] Letter from Calvin Asbury, Special Indian Agent, to C. F. Haukes, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, April 21, 1913. RG 75, National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California.

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[31] Letter from Special Indian Agent to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, February 20, 1914. RG 75, National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California.

[32] Notice from C. H. Asbury, Special Indian Agent, September 6, 1913. RG 75, B.I.A., National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California.

[33] Creel, p. 16.

[34] "Indians Get Lease Money," *Record-Courier*, Douglas County, Nevada, February 26, 1915.

[35] Warren L. d'Azevedo and Thomas Kavanagh, "The Trail of the Missing Basket," *The Indian Historian*, 7, No. 3 (Summer 1974), pp. 12–13.

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[37] Letter from Woodrow Wilson, U.S. President, to Key Pittman, U.S. Senator, June 22, 1914. RG 75, National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California.

[38] Letter from C. H. Asbury, Special Indian Agent, to Captain Pete, November 21, 1914. RG 75, National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California.

[39] Letter from E. B. Merritt, Assistant Commissioner, to Captain Pete et al., November 11, 1914. RG 75, National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California.

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[2] Invitation to the Flag Day Exercise, from the Superintendent of the Carson Indian School, April 1914. Nevada Historical Society Archives, Reno, Nevada.

[3] "Indian Celebration was Great Success," *The Record-Courier*, Douglas County, Nevada, May 1, 1914.

[4] *Ibid.*

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[6] Mortsolf to the Commissioner, April 27, 1914.

[7] Letter from L. A. Dorrington, Special Agent, to the Non-Reservation Indians of Nevada under the jurisdiction of the Reno Indian Agency, September 9, 1918. RG 75, National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California.

[8] Letter from L. A. Dorrington, Special Agent, to Captain Sam B. Courts, January 22, 1918. RG 75, National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California; also letter from John Pohland, Clerk (for L. A. Dorrington, Special Agent), to the Washo Indians, January 23, 1918. RG 75, National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California.

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[12] *Ibid.*

[13] Letter from H. C. Jepsen, Douglas County Clerk, to L. A. Dorrington, May 4, 1918. RG 75, National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California.

[14] Douglas County Council of Defense, "Notice to Indians," June 1918. RG 75, National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California.

[15] Arthur M. Allen, "Report in Re Attitude of County Council of Defence [sic] at Gardnerville, Nevada, Toward Indian Labor," June 20, 1918. RG 75, National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California.

[16] Letter from L. A. Dorrington, Special Agent, to the Consul [sic] of Defense, Douglas County, Nevada, June 15, 1918. RG 75 National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California.

[17] Letter from Geo. A. Montrose, Director of the Douglas County, Nevada, Council of Defense, to L. A. Dorrington, Special Agent, June 18, 1918. RG 75, National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California.

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[20] Lorenzo D. Creel, "Report on Washoe Indian Allotments," to L. A. Dorrington, Special Agent, October 12, 1918, pp. 4–4½. RG 75, National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California.

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[22] Creel, p. 19; also Creel, Exhibit C., p. 2.

[23] Creel, p. 20.

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[41] Scott to Oddie, May 6, 1929.

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[43] "Social and Economic Information for the Dresslerville Rancheria," 1936, p. 14. RG 75, B.I.A., National Archives, FARC San Bruno, California.

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[61] Memorandum from Leonard Ware, p. 2.

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[68] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 85.

[70] *Ibid.*, pp. 132, 134, 136, 147.

[71] *Ibid.*, pp. 149, 158.

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